



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

[www.adph.org](http://www.adph.org)

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## Scale Back Alabama kicks off eighth year

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### CONTACT:

Teresa Fair  
(334) 206-7941  
Rosemary Blackmon  
800-489-2542

Gina McDonald, Esq., a Birmingham lawyer and a winner in the recent Bigger Loser contest, kicked off the 2014 Scale Back Alabama competition today.

“I have fought obesity all of my life,” McDonald said. “I couldn’t bend down to tie my own shoes. I was just existing before I won the ‘life lottery’ by being selected from a field of 300,000 applicants to be on the Biggest Loser program.”

After losing more than 100 pounds and reversing her Type 2 diabetes, McDonald is leading the charge for Scale Back Alabama this year to let others know that anything is possible if you set realistic goals and stick to them.

“I encourage you to join Scale Back Alabama and to use the resources on the website,” added McDonald. She also encouraged participants to choose teammates who will be positive, and she stressed the importance of incorporating exercise into your daily routine, along with healthy eating. “Park farther away and take the stairs,” suggested McDonald.

Scale Back Alabama is a 10-week, statewide weight-loss contest designed to help Alabama fight its battle with obesity by encouraging participants to develop lifelong healthy habits. The program, which is free and targeted to adults 18 and older, primarily focuses on the workplace and utilizes other local organizations as weigh-in sites. To enter the contest and be eligible for the cash-prize drawings, individuals must visit an official Scale Back Alabama weigh-in site during the week of Jan. 18 – 24 to register and do their initial team weigh in. A list of sites is included at [www.scalebackalabama.com](http://www.scalebackalabama.com).

Approximately one-third of all Alabamians are considered obese. Obesity can lead to health problems such as increased risk of diseases, cancer and heart disease, as well as problems with bones and joints. Obesity is also costly, with medical expenses for an obese employee estimated to be 42 percent higher than a person with a healthy weight. The annual health care cost estimate is as high as \$147 billion a year.

McDonald stated that losing just 10 pounds can make a big difference, and she promised to share her tips and experiences throughout the contest.

Last year 27,000 Alabamians participated in Scale Back and lost almost 130,000 pounds. Scale Back Alabama is sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.

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