Scale Back Alabama kicks off 2015 contest

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Officials with the Alabama Hospital Association, the Alabama Department of Public Health and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama kicked off the state's largest weight-loss program. In its ninth year, Scale Back Alabama, a free program designed to address the state's obesity problem, has resulted in thousands of Alabamians losing more than one million pounds.

"While there are lots of great local programs designed to help Alabamians get fit, Scale Back Alabama is probably the only free, statewide program," said Rosemary Blackmon, executive vice president/COO of the Alabama Hospital Association. "It's a great way for our hospitals to encourage healthier lifestyles rather than treat the effects of unhealthy living."

The 2015 program has been redesigned somewhat based on feedback from previous participants and local coordinators. Those 18 and older can now participate in teams of two, rather than teams of four, and they can go online to self register starting Jan. 6. Once registered, they must go to an official weigh-in site during the week of Jan. 19 – 25 to have their initial weigh in. Then, each week they will receive health tips from a panel of experts. At the end of the contest, the names of all individuals and teams who lose at least 10 pounds (one pound a week) will be placed in a drawing for cash prizes.

"Individuals who are obese have a much higher likelihood of having heart disease and of having a stroke," said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. "And with 32 percent of our citizens considered obese, we're bound to continue to have bad health outcomes unless something changes. Scale Back Alabama is an important public awareness effort that we believe is changing lives."

Scale Back Alabama is sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, in partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama. For more information, visit www.scalebackalabama.com or visit us on Facebook.

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