



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Encourages Alaskans to Take National Activity Challenge

March 10, 2008, Juneau, Alaska - Governor Sarah Palin today issued a challenge to all Alaskans: Get active for at least 30 minutes a day this spring to help Alaska win national recognition.

To kick things off, Governor Palin signed up for the National President's Challenge, a six-week competition sponsored by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. The Challenge runs from March 20 through May 15. Governor Palin is encouraging all Alaskans – from children to seniors – to sign up for the challenge on www.presidentschallenge.org during the next few weeks.

What's the prize for participation? Better health. Physical activity makes you feel and look better.

Another prize is a positive spotlight that will shine on Alaska. The governors with the highest percentage of participating residents will be recognized for supporting healthy lifestyles.

"Participating in this challenge is free and easy," Governor Palin said. "It's only 30 minutes of activity a day. You can walk, run, ski, or even bicycle your way to the goal. About 100 different activities count."

The rules of the challenge are simple:

- The challenge starts March 20, but sign up through April 3.
- Adults must be active for at least 30 minutes during five days of each of the six weeks in the challenge, and report their activity on www.presidentschallenge.org.
- Children 6 through 17 need to complete 60 minutes of activity five days a week.
- Sign up as an individual or with a group.

Poor diet and a lack of physical activity can increase the risk of becoming unhealthy, and excessive weight can increase a person's risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other health problems.

Recent state surveys showed that more than 60 percent of Alaska adults are overweight or obese. More than 27 percent of high school students in Alaska are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Medical spending related to obesity cost Alaska about \$195 million in 2003, but this is an underestimation of the true costs of obesity because it does not include indirect costs such as lost productivity at work.

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