

# Health Policy

## NEWSLETTER

## Moving Philadelphia! Creating Healthier Communities

Thomas Jefferson University

May 11, 2010

On May 11, 2010, JSPH hosted an event entitled *Moving Philadelphia! Creating Healthier Communities* to launch the US National Physical Activity Plan. The plan was released on May 3, 2010 by an expert panel, including representation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society. Philadelphia was the first city to formally endorse the plan.

The national plan focuses on prevention and wellness and is yet another example of the tremendous amount of energy being devoted to the future and how best to create healthy communities where people thrive. Clearly, physical activity is an important component of wellness, particularly in the face of rising rates of obesity and other associated chronic conditions. The program focused on physical activity and included numerous exhibitors on the campus green, as well as physical activities for children and adults – including an outdoor spinning class conducted by Jeff-IBC Wellness Center. Other participating organizations included: TJU Activities Office; TJU Center for Urban Health; Miss Amy Kids; Back on My Feet; Bicycle Ambassadors; Healthy Times; Gearing Up; and the Philadelphia Eagles.

Formal presentations were preceded by a very impressive mini-press event in which local student

health journalists (grades 4-8) from 5 schools had an opportunity to interview program speakers and ask questions about the plan and about physical activity and wellness in general. As part of the student-driven, *Healthy Times* newspaper program administered by The Food Trust, these young journalists also interviewed exhibitors and participated in the conference program. The students took notes throughout the day and developed articles for their school newspapers.

On behalf of Mayor Michael Nutter, Donald Schwarz, MD, MPH, Deputy Mayor for Health and Opportunity and Health Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia, presented a proclamation declaring May 11, 2010 Moving Philadelphia Day. In his keynote address, Dr. Schwarz discussed Philadelphia's high rate of obesity and the many hidden costs associated with obesity and chronic conditions. Dr. Schwarz noted the link between physical activity levels and the built environment, stressing that communities must be made safer and more accessible to encourage recreation.

Other noted guest speakers included Allison Kleinfelter from the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity and Founder and CEO of achievABILITY, who discussed the US National Physical Activity Plan in detail, and Richard Killingsworth, MPH, Senior Advisor at Nemours

Health and Prevention Services, who explored the impact of the built environment on health and wellness. Both speakers issued a call to action, not just to policy makers and decision makers, but also to local grassroots organizations and to each and every individual. The push for change must come from each of these levels in order to get the country moving.

The program concluded with a panel discussion. Panelists were Dr. Corinne Caldwell, Chair of the PA State Board of Education Wellness Committee; Ryan Oelkers, Executive Director of Cadence Cycling Foundation; Kristin Gavin, Founder of Gearing-Up; and Diane-Louise Wormley, PUFFA Project Director, Health Promotion Council. ■

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**To listen to a podcast and view slides from this program, visit: [http://jdc.jefferson.edu/moving\\_philadelphia/2010/May11](http://jdc.jefferson.edu/moving_philadelphia/2010/May11)**

**To learn more about the US National Physical Activity Plan, visit <http://www.ncppa.org/resources/plans/>.**