

Getting America Healthy: One Small Step at a Time

(NAPSA)—America's health officials are hoping a new campaign will leave a big footprint on the nation's ongoing battle with weight. To provide the resources Americans need to adopt manageable lifestyle changes, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in partnership with The Advertising Council, recently unveiled its *Healthy Lifestyles & Disease Prevention* campaign, a national public education program aimed at encouraging families to make small changes in their lifestyle starting today—that will make them healthier in the long-run.

The new Ad Council campaign—which includes multimedia public service advertisements (PSAs) and a user-friendly, interactive Web site—encourages families to “take a small step to get healthy.”

“America needs to get healthier one small step at a time,” said HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson. “Each step does make a difference—whether it's taking the stairs instead of the elevator or snacking on fruits and vegetables.”

The introduction of the campaign coincides with findings of a new study released by HHS' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that indicate an estimated 400,000 deaths are attributed to overweight and obesity annually. In fact, poor diet and physical inactivity are poised to surpass tobacco use as the leading cause of preventable death in America.

“Americans need to understand that overweight and obesity are literally killing us,” Secretary Thompson said. “This recent CDC report should motivate all Americans to take action to protect their health. But people don't need to go to extremes—such as daily workouts at the gym or the latest diet plan—to make improvements in their health.”

Obesity and overweight have an impact on the U.S. economy as well. In 2000, the total direct and indirect costs, including medical costs and lost productivity,

10 Small Steps You & Your Family Can Take Tomorrow:

- Eat only half of your dessert.
- Avoid food portions larger than your fist.
- Walk kids to school.
- Replace your Sunday drive with a Sunday walk.
- Wash the car by hand.
- Park farther from the store and walk.
- Play with your kids 30 minutes a day.
- Take the stairs instead of the escalator.
- Drink water before every meal.
- Mow the lawn with a push—instead of a riding—mower.



amounted to more than \$117 billion—hundreds of dollars for every man, woman and child in the U.S.

HHS has long been an advocate of healthier living, spearheading numerous initiatives to motivate Americans of all ages to become more active. The campaign is part of an overarching strategy aimed at fighting obesity in the U.S. Other components include new research unveiled by the National Institutes of Health that will look at the causes and consequences of the disease, as well as examining potential cures, and an FDA Obesity Working Group's recommendations to strengthen food labeling and encourage restaurants to provide calorie and nutrition information on menus.

The *Healthy Lifestyles & Disease Prevention* campaign's aim is to coalesce health organizations, media and others to join in America's fight against overweight and obesity. Already partnering with HHS and the Ad Council in this endeavor are such varied organizations as Lifetime Television and Sesame Workshop—both of whom share a common goal of reducing America's waistlines and the impact that obesity and overweight have on the health of families across the country.

To learn about small steps you and your family can take to lose weight and get healthy, log onto www.smallstep.gov.