



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 24, 2010

CONTACT

Tangela Floyd at 317.266.9622 or tfloyd@indymca.org
(YMCA of Greater Indianapolis)

Kim Irwin at 317.352.3844 or info@healthbydesignonline.org
(Alliance for Health Promotion & Health by Design)

Ryan Puckett at 317.450.3723 or rmpuckett@gmail.com
(ACSM American Fitness Index)

Tom Crouch at 317.542.4464 or tcrouch@cityoflawrence.org
(City of Lawrence)

Eleather Baker at 317.536.1216 or ebaker@fitcityindy.org
(Fit City)

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TO KEEP RESIDENTS HEALTHY AND FIT

Indianapolis Ranks 44th in Latest ACSM American Fitness Index Report

INDIANAPOLIS – A group of Indianapolis' most prominent health, fitness and wellness organizations are urging city residents to lead healthier, more active lifestyles. In a report released by the American College of Sports Medicine's American Fitness Index (AFI) program, Indianapolis ranked 44th with regards to health and fitness status among America's 50 most populous metropolitan areas.

The YMCA of Greater Indianapolis and the Indianapolis-based Alliance for Health Promotion's Health By Design initiative shared details of their efforts to improve community health and fitness. ACSM contends that the solution to improving physical activity levels and decreasing obesity rates lies at the local level.

In April, the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis announced its partnership with United Health Group (UHG) to help combat diabetes. Through this partnership, UHG will pay 100% of the cost for its members who are eligible to enroll in the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program. Targeted to those who have pre-diabetes, the goals of the program are to reduce and to maintain individual weight loss by at least seven percent by eating more healthily and by increasing physical activity to 150 minutes per week. Participation in the program has proven to cut participants' chances of developing the disease by more than half and studies have shown that the program yields better results than prescribing drugs to individuals in order to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes.

The AFI report notes that the Indianapolis area has a diabetes rate of 10.9 percent compared to the U.S. average of 8.3 percent. The local death rate related to diabetes per 100,000 is 20.7.

"Though I am disappointed and concerned about the ranking of our community as one of the least fit places to live in the country, I am encouraged on other fronts," said Eric Ellsworth, president and CEO for

YMCA of Greater Indianapolis. “The YMCA’s effort to turn the tide on Type 2 diabetes is being catapulted into the national spotlight and it is our goal to reverse this terrible trend.”

“The YMCA of Greater Indianapolis will become a greater catalyst for change, locally, over the next several years. We will increase our capacity in order to be an effective community leader in the war on inactivity, poor nutrition and lifestyle-related diseases,” added Ellsworth.

Health by Design Executive Director Kim Irwin said much is being done throughout the City of Indianapolis to improve health, “We’re certainly encouraged by the growing recognition among community leaders that neighborhood design and transportation options do in fact impact our health. The addition of on-street bike lanes, corresponding education and encouragement campaigns, a commitment to building and maintaining sidewalks, and finding safe routes for children to walk and bike to and from school are all part of our initiative to promote physical activity as part of one’s daily routines.”

“Such activities also result in the additional community benefits of economic development, improved safety and access, reduced air pollution and congestion, and enhanced social capital – resulting in a better quality of life for all Indianapolis residents,” added Irwin.

The AFI report reveals that only 1.2 percent of Indy area residents use public transportation to commute to work (compared to an average of 4.4 percent among the 50 measured metro areas) and only 2.1 percent walk or bike to work (the best bike/walk commuting score is 6.6 percent).

The AFI data report reflects a composite of preventive health behaviors, levels of chronic disease conditions, health care access, as well as community resources and policies that support physical activity.

For a complete list of Indianapolis’ strengths and challenges plus a breakdown of the components that helped make up its score, please visit the AFI Web page and download the Indianapolis report at www.americanfitnessindex.org/report.htm.

Additional local organizations and municipalities recognizing the AFI data report findings and the need to urge city residents to lead healthier, more active lifestyles include IndyConnect, FitCity, the City of Lawrence and Avondale Meadows.