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Campaign to End Obesity Applauds Presidential Proclamation on National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, the Campaign to End Obesity commended President Obama for his executive order proclaiming May 2010 National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. The President called upon all Americans to “take control of their health and wellness by making physical activity, fitness, and sports participation an important part of their daily lives.”

“If we are going to reduce the one of the greatest single cost to our health care system, Americans need exactly this kind of support to get fit and reverse the obesity epidemic,” said Penny Lee, Executive Director of the Campaign to End Obesity. “President Obama’s proclamation is a strong call to action. Physical fitness can be easily incorporated into our every-day lives —from incentivizing workplace wellness to structuring physical activity in our schools to creating better infrastructure that makes it convenient for Americans to be active and fit. There is no better time than now —this May— for individuals, families, institutions, communities, and even Congress to get moving and make physical fitness a greater priority.”

There are many steps Congress can take to support the President’s initiative. When people don’t have safe places to move or play, they’re less likely to be active. Indeed, a study published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that people who live in easy walking distance of shops and businesses lower their risk of obesity by 35 percent. The Campaign holds that Congress should continue to fund strategies that improve the nation’s infrastructure in ways that encourage physical activity, and support measures that promote physical fitness for children and adults.

Additionally, roughly 39 million work days are lost to obesity-related illnesses each year. Many employers identify employee fitness as an economic imperative: to remain competitive, they need healthy, productive workers. Congress can support workplace health by offering tax incentives for employee wellness measures, for companies large and small.

Obesity is one of America’s costliest medical condition. It is linked to the prevalence of more than 60 chronic conditions; it triggers \$147 billion in health care costs each year, with half paid by Medicare and Medicaid. And with nearly a third of American children overweight or obese, today’s this generation could be the first in 200 years to have a shorter, less healthy life than their parents.

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About the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund

The Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund is dedicated to federal policy changes that can reverse one of America’s costliest diseases. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to speak with one voice for measures to reverse the obesity epidemic and promote healthy weight in children and adults.

