

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Secretary Sebelius and President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition Announce the "Million PALA Challenge" to get Americans moving**

**Washington, D.C.** – Earlier today, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius; President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition (PCFSN) Co-Chair Dominique Dawes; and Let's Move! Executive Director Robin Schepper launched the "Million PALA Challenge" at the Council's first official meeting in Washington, D.C. The goal of the campaign is to get one million or more Americans to sign up for and achieve the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) between now and September, 2011.

"Ending obesity is critical to children's health and to their health as adults. Nearly one in three American kids is overweight or obese, which puts them at a much greater risk of diabetes, heart disease and cancer," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "There are more than 300 million people in America today, and we want every single one of them to live a healthy lifestyle," she added.

The PALA program is for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities and is a great way to jumpstart or maintain a healthy lifestyle by engaging in moderate to intense physical activity for 60 minutes a day, five days per week over six weeks for kids, and 30 minutes a day over the same period of time for adults. The "Million PALA Challenge" supports the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative to end childhood obesity within a generation by getting more youth and families committed to getting active and eating better.

The challenge is being launched during National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, as designated by President Obama's signing of a proclamation on September 1, 2010, and kicks off the start of the 2010-2011 school year. In addition to promoting increased physical activity and healthier eating for youth, the First Lady has also challenged the White House staff to lead by example and sign up for PALA during the challenge period, September 2010-September 2011.

The Challenge is supported by school and after-school programs across the nation, including four key partners: Boys and Girls Clubs of America; the YMCA; National Recreation and Park Association (the three largest after-school programs in America); as well as the General Mills Foundation; who were all in attendance at the kickoff announcement at the PCFSN meeting today.

Also in attendance at today's announcement were Council members Carl Edwards (NASCAR Champion); Allyson Felix (Olympic Track and Field Athlete); Grant Hill (NBA Forward, Phoenix Suns); Donna Richardson Joyner (International Fitness Expert); Michelle Kwan (Olympic Figure Skater); Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey (President and CEO, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation); Cornell McClellan (First Family's Personal Trainer); Dr. Stephen McDonough (North Dakota-based Pediatrician); Chris Paul (NBA Point

Guard, New Orleans Hornets); Curtis Pride (Head Baseball Coach, Gallaudet Univ., retired MLB Player); and Dr. Ian Smith (Medical/Diet Expert); and Dan Barber (Sustainable Farming Chef).

Turning to the President's Council members, Co-Chair Dominique Dawes said: "It's our time to shine and I know that, with all of the amazing talent sitting in this room and at these tables, we will make an impact and we will get more Americans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to take that first step toward leading a healthy lifestyle."

#### **About PCFSN**

The President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition (PCFSN) is a committee of up to 25 volunteer citizens appointed by the President to serve in an advisory capacity through the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Through its programs and partnerships with the public, private and non-profit sectors, PCFSN serves as a catalyst to promote healthy lifestyles through fitness, sports and nutrition programs and initiatives that educate, empower and engage Americans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. For more information about PCFSN visit [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov). For more information about the President's Challenge programs, including the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) visit [www.presidentschallenge.org](http://www.presidentschallenge.org).

#### **About Let's Move**

The *Let's Move!* campaign, started by First Lady Michelle Obama, has an ambitious national goal of solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation so that children born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight. *Let's Move!* will combat the epidemic of childhood obesity through a comprehensive approach that will engage every sector impacting the health of children and will provide schools, families and communities simple tools to help kids be more active, eat better, and get healthy. For more information about Let's Move! visit [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).

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