



## NIHB to Launch a Workplace Fitness Program: *GO the EXTRA MILE!*

### Introduction

The National Indian Health Board (NIHB) is excited to introduce our new healthy workplace initiative, **GO the EXTRA MILE**. The goal of the NIHB GO the EXTRA MILE initiative is to create a healthier work environment and promote employee health through providing staff members with thirty paid minutes each work day to go for a walk. Along with the NIHB Executive Director, each staff member pledged to walk an additional mile each day for an entire year. The GO the EXTRA MILE initiative stems from the CEO Pledge, a project through the National Coalition on Promoting Physical Activity (NCPA), which urges CEOs to pledge their commitment to foster a healthy workplace. The NIHB GO the EXTRA MILE initiative is the newest element of collaborated efforts within the National Physical Activity Plan.

### The National Physical Activity Plan

The National Physical Activity Plan, the first, national comprehensive plan to support and encourage physical activity among all Americans, was launched in 2010 through a 10 month collaboration between experts from various, diverse fields. The plan comprises a wide range of public policy recommendations across eight broad sectors. Through the National Physical Activity Plan, hundreds of organizations are working together to change our communities in ways that will enable every American to be physically active. Its ultimate purpose is to improve health, prevent disease and disability, and enhance quality of life.

### The CEO Pledge

The National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (NCPA) is a 501(c)(4) tax exempt organization that is leading the implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan at the national level through The CEO Pledge, which encourages every CEO in the United States to recognize physical activity as an important driver of employee health. Studies of employee wellness programs consistently find that executive leadership is critical to employee engagement. If employees believe that creating a culture of physical activity is an executive priority, employees are more likely to be physically active.

The CEO Pledge states:

*“For the betterment of my company, our employees, their families, and our country, I pledge to improve employee health and wellness by providing opportunities and resources for physical activity before, during or after the workday, and to enhance my own health and wellness by engaging in regular physical activity.”*

### GO the EXTRA MILE Initiative

There is a strong correlation between obesity and diabetes—more than 80% of people with Type 2 diabetes are overweight. With diabetes and obesity on the rise, every organization in the United States has an obligation and responsibility to lead its community to a healthier future. Nowhere is this need more urgent than in Indian Country. At nearly 16.1%, American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have the highest age-adjusted prevalence of Type 2 diabetes among all U.S. racial and ethnic groups. The obesity rate, which is determined by



having a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater, is 39% for AI/AN 18 and older. Among AI/AN adults 18 and older, the percentage of inactive physical activity in 2010 was 53.9%, which did not meet federal physical activity guidelines (at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, i.e., brisk walking a week).

## **Mission**

The NIHB recognizes this urgent need to advocate for physical activity as a preventive measure against chronic diseases. NIHB would like to welcome Executive Directors from Area Indian Health Boards, Tribes, and other Tribal organizations to join NIHB in recognizing this urgent need by signing the CEO Pledge and Go the EXTRA MILE.

## **Goal**

NIHB's yearly goal is to encourage every NIHB employee to walk a mile every day (an additional mile separate from daily routine) for a year. With 13 employees, the minimum yearly walking goal NIHB is aiming to achieve is 4,745 miles. With these aggregated miles, NIHB will "virtually" walk to all Area Indian Health Boards and the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (Bemidji Area). The idea is to provide encouragement to Tribes and Tribal organizations to GO the EXTRA MILE. Together, we can help transform our Tribal nation's overall health and wellbeing.

## **The Plan**

As part of the CEO Pledge, NIHB has established a plan to implement exercise in the workplace.

- Provide thirty paid minutes a day for staff to go for a walk.
- Track and report miles daily.
- Arrange healthy incentives for meeting team walking goals.
- Coordinate community walks.
- Update monthly the "GO the EXTRA MILE" website with physical activity events, exercise information, and progress from NIHB and participating organizations.
- Offer a toolkit to encourage other organizations to GO the EXTRA MILE.

One of NIHB's primary areas of focus is to improve the health of AI/AN. Through exercise and diet, many American Indians who suffer from this disease, can help mitigate the symptoms of diabetes through diet and exercise. NIHB GO the EXTRA MILE initiative is just a small way that NIHB can demonstrate positive and supportive workplace efforts to support diabetic employees, help prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes through added physical activity and enhance the quality of health for all employees.

## **Kick-off Launch**

NIHB's kickoff launch for the GO the EXTRA MILE is on **November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 at 8:00 am** in front of the National Museum of American Indians in Washington, D.C. November is Native American Heritage Month and National Diabetes Awareness Month—the perfect time to start our new healthy initiative for promoting exercise in the workplace.

***It is not a marathon, or a sprint, but a relay that we, together, walk in order to outsmart chronic diseases that threaten our health in Indian Country.***

