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Special Olympics Receives Up to \$22.5 Million from the CDC to Build Inclusive Health Programming

One of Special Olympics' largest health-focused government grants in history will create a tipping point for inclusive health of people with intellectual disabilities

Washington, D.C. – 21 June 2016 – Special Olympics announced today that it will receive up to \$22.5 million from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) over the course of the next 5 years, including \$4.5 million in 2016-17. The funds focus on creating equitable access to quality health care, education, and services throughout communities - or inclusive health - for people with intellectual disabilities throughout the United States.

This award will fund the multifaceted Special Olympics health program.

- Special Olympics will activate 400 partners with health-related services ranging from follow-up care services to fitness opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities valued at \$28 million.
- Trained medical professionals will complete 260,000 free health examinations, including providing referrals when necessary, for people with intellectual disabilities through Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® events. An additional 55,000 health providers and students will be trained on the health needs of people with intellectual disabilities across the United States.
- Special Olympics will engage and train 300 health influencers, such as governments, universities, corporate, non-profits and key individuals, in providing inclusive health programs, policies, curricula, and funding for people with intellectual disabilities.
- More than 20 Special Olympics Programs will be recognized as “Healthy Communities” due to year-round, inclusive health and wellness programming.
- A total of 7,000 families, coaches, athlete leaders will be trained to help support the health needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

“I cannot overstate the importance of our long-term partners at the CDC, as their support has been critical to our health program’s impact and growth. When CDC first began their support of Special Olympics programming in 2002, our health program was limited and we were only able to serve the health needs of our population at events and competitions. Now we have grown to become the largest global health organization focused on people with intellectual disabilities. Moving forward and with CDC’s ongoing support, we will continue to shed light on the health disparities experienced by people with intellectual disabilities and leverage our evidence-based work with partnering organizations and individuals to make health systems change,” shared Special Olympics Chief Executive Officer Mary Davis.



“CDC is committed to supporting the health and wellness of all, including those living with intellectual disabilities. We are proud of the impact we have made through our partnership with Special Olympics and look forward to continuing this important relationship,” says Dr. Coleen Boyle, Director of CDC’s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. “Special Olympics makes a significant impact in not only reducing health disparities for people with intellectual disabilities, but also by supporting the importance of inclusion in health policies and programs for everyone.”

Special Olympics’ vision of its health program, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, is to create a world where people with intellectual disabilities have the same opportunities and access to health care as people without intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics’ 19 years of experience identifying and addressing the unmet health needs of people with intellectual disabilities has revealed the myriad of complex barriers to health faced by this population. The five-year award will allow Special Olympics to continue to implement local health promotion programming such as Healthy Athletes, activate communities and ultimately strengthen the nation’s capacity for inclusive health or equitable access to quality health care, education, and services throughout communities.

“Special Olympics is more than just sports. Because of Healthy Athletes I have learned to eat healthy foods. I have lost a hundred pounds by changing bad habits. I also drink water instead of pop, exercise and eat healthy foods,” shared Jason Gieschen, a Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger and Special Olympics athlete from Nebraska who had a cyst in his eye removed, wisdom teeth extracted and shoe size corrected because of Healthy Athletes. “Special Olympics helps me live a healthy lifestyle.”

People with intellectual disabilities are part of one of the largest and most medically underserved disability groups in the world. Millions with intellectual disabilities lack access to quality health care and experience dramatically higher rates of preventable disease, chronic pain and suffering, and premature death in every country around the world.

As part of the 5-year award, Special Olympics will work with the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry, and the American Association on Health and Disability to integrate and expand offerings, while disseminating information and education, nationally for people with intellectual disabilities.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports, every day around the world. We empower people with intellectual disabilities to become accepted and valued members of their communities, which leads to a more respectful and inclusive society for all. Using sports as the catalyst and programming around health and education, Special Olympics is fighting inactivity, injustice and intolerance. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown to more than 4.5 million athletes in nearly 170 countries. With the support of more than one million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics delivers 32 Olympic-type sports and nearly 100,000 games and competitions throughout the year. Special Olympics is supported by individuals, foundations and partners, including the Christmas Records Trust, the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics, The Coca-Cola Company, The Walt Disney Company and ESPN, Microsoft, Lions Clubs International, Toys"R"Us, Mattel, P&G, Bank of America, Essilor Vision Foundation, the Golisano Foundation, Finish Line, and Safilo Group. Engage with us on: Twitter @specialolympics,

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