**Low Cost, Innovative Practices on How to Integrate Health into Special Olympics Programming and into the Lives of Special Olympics Athletes**

No matter where your Program is right now in its health programming, there are steps you can take to weave in health into your existing programming that are low- or no-cost. This document provides some examples of how Special Olympics Programs have integrated health into their programming and have aided in Special Olympics athletes receiving more health in their everyday lives and community in low cost, innovative ways. If you are looking for more in-depth information about the materials used or activation please contact, Kristin Hughes ([khughes@specialolympics.org](mailto:khughes@specialolympics.org)).

* Health Heroes/Athletes as Health Advocates
  + Originating in Special Olympics South Africa, this program was developed as a health leadership course/program for athletes and has been utilized and adapted in many other Special Olympics Programs. The athletes are taught proper health techniques and provided education to share with their teammates and fellow athletes. Some Programs have taken this training to a next level and integrated the athlete leaders into a Healthy Athletes event or throughout competition in health advocacy roles.
* Team Trainer
  + The Team Trainer program in Special Olympics New York pairs [AADMD](http://aadmd.org/) students (medical and dental residents) with a local Special Olympics sports training team. The Team Trainer will work with the team throughout the season, guiding them through a wellness challenge, managing the Medical and Consent forms for each athlete on the team, accompanying the team to events with Healthy Athletes, and ensuring follow up care is identified for any issues identified through health screenings.
* Healthy Habits Stations
  + Special Olympics Wisconsin created the idea of Healthy Habits Stations, which has been replicated and adapted in other Programs. Healthy Habits are supplemental stations to Healthy Athletes or conducted when it is not possible to do a Healthy Athletes event. Healthy Habits are interactive education stations that help build awareness of how healthy habits affect sport performance and everyday life. Displays, health educators (often including athlete health leaders) and giveaways are part of the stations. Some topics that have been covered include hydration, hand hygiene, sun safety, and nutrition.
* SO FIT!
  + SO FIT! is a program designed by Special Olympics Wisconsin to provide community wellness opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to participate in endurance sports, set and achieve goals, and be recognized for their accomplishments. The program promotes community-based training, with goals ranging from competing in a 5K run/walk, to running a half marathon, to competing in a triathlon. The athletes set weekly goals to help achieve the larger goal and completes regular logs tracking their activities.
* Coaches integrating health and wellness into practices
  + Special Olympics Arizona created a program called LEAP, which is a simple health and wellness course for coaches to conduct during programs. Each practice there are different brief health lessons for coaches to give to athletes. This concept has been adapted in other Programs.
* Health Day Partnerships
  + Forming partnerships with organizations in the local community who are conducting health days and working with them to integrate Special Olympics athletes and others with intellectual disabilities into their outreach and programming has proved successful for several Special Olympics Programs.
* Walking Clubs
  + Many Programs have started local, unified walking clubs to help promote health and fitness.
* Partner with Local Clinics
  + Special Olympics Peru partnered with Universidad Cientifica del Sur, a full service dental clinic, to provide very reduced cost dental care for people with ID. The clinic is opened to these patients specifically three times a week.
* Wellness Wednesday/Using social media
  + Originating in Special Olympics Wisconsin, #WellnessWednesday is being used across the Special Olympics Movement on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to provide health tips and promote health education messages on Wednesdays.
* A Day for Special Smiles
  + Through partnerships with universities or local community organizations providing dental care, Special Olympics Programs have been able to facilitate access to care for their athletes, often enabling the Program to direct athletes who receive referrals from Special Smiles to the care they need. The University or organization provides a day and location in which they provide free care and treatment. The Special Olympics Program then calls or schedules Special Olympics athletes to attend. Special Olympics Arizona, Wisconsin and New York have strong models.
* Community Wellness Partnerships
  + Local YMCAs and Parks and Recreation Departments have become successful partnerships for several Programs. YMCAs are providing programming or free gym access for Special Olympics athletes. Parks and Recreation Departments are providing programming such as cooking classes and wellness outings for people with intellectual disabilities in the community.