



AMERICA BATTLES OBESITY, DROPPING FIVE MILLION POUNDS!

Nearly 1.5 million Americans have lost more than 5 million pounds with the 50 Million Pound Challenge

NEW YORK, NY (November 2, 2009) – With health care legislation pending in Congress, Americans are anxious to see how the government will respond to the nation's biggest obstacle to wellness: obesity. Even with reform and advances in medicine on the horizon, nearly 1.5 million citizens have taken matters into their own hands, joining Dr. Ian Smith's 50 Million Pound Challenge, which announced this week the loss of its **5 millionth pound** – a watershed moment for the members of The Challenge and for a nation struggling against obesity and its medical consequences.

The hard truth is that two-thirds of Americans are overweight and obesity-related costs run up a \$147 billion tab annually. But momentum from September's 50 Million Pound Challenge Walk Off, which brought together 16 city governments and 6,000 people in more than 80 cities across America, inspired veteran Challengers and newcomers alike to drive harder toward the 5 million pound milestone this month. Faced with recent studies claiming that women overweight in their middle age suffer greater risk of severe health problems in later years and that obesity is quickly becoming the leading cause of cancer in Western countries, Challengers are taking their weight loss more earnestly than ever before.

"Two and a half years ago we charged ourselves – as individuals, as communities and as a nation – to turn the health crisis in America around," said Dr. Ian Smith, founder of The 50 Million Pound Challenge and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The 4 Day Diet*. "Together we've lost more than 5 million pounds and made big strides toward improving our lives and lifting the heavy burden of obesity from America's health care costs. We proved that The Challenge is an historical movement."

As the 5 million pound accomplishment indicates, members of the Challenge have had unprecedented success losing weight. The 50 Million Pound Challenge takes a community-based approach that provides members with free resources at 50millionpounds.com, including a 30-day diet plan, online journal, personal weight and activity trackers, and interactive support system needed for long-term success.

Challengers across the country have had life-changing experiences achieving their share of the weight loss. Craig Nash of Chicago, IL, lost 199 pounds. Charlene Daley of Orlando, FL, lost 127 pounds. Kenya Morgan of Salisbury, NC, lost 70 pounds. "I knew that I wanted to be there for my husband and children and they deserved to have me at my best. There is no greater motivation than that," Morgan said.

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About The 50 Million Pound Challenge

Dr. Ian Smith's *50 Million Pound Challenge* is a call-to-action for all Americans to come together and help people take control of their health by getting fit, losing excess weight and turning back the deadly toll of weight-related diseases that threaten nearly half of us. *The Challenge*, is a campaign supported and endorsed by leaders across the community and national civic and health organizations.

About Dr. Ian Smith

Dr. Ian is a diet expert on *VH1's Celebrity Fit Club* and author of the *NY Times* #1 best-sellers *4 Day Diet*, *Fat Smash Diet* and *Extreme Fat Smash Diet*, and other works of fiction and non-fiction. He hosts his own TV and radio shows, *BET's Meet the Faith* and *HealthWatch* on *American Urban Radio Network*. Dr. Ian is a contributor to *The View* and *Men's Health Magazine*. He has filed reports and written for *NBC Nightly News*, *Today Show*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *People*, *Cosmopolitan* and University of Chicago's *Medicine on the Midway*. He lives with his family in Chicago.
