

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## National Council of Presidents to Spread the Message of Health Agree To Encourage their Memberships to Join *The 50 Million Pound Challenge*

Washington, D.C. -- During a luncheon at the annual Council of Presidents meeting, Challenge founder Dr. Ian Smith urged the nine leaders of the international, Greek-lettered organizations to work together to improve the health of its members through participation in the [50 Million Pound Challenge](#). They agreed the issue is paramount and to use the free Challenge resources as an important part of their health initiatives. With a total of more than 1.4 million members, an organized grassroots effort by the National Pan-Hellenic Council would not only improve lives, but also help sustain the effort to reach the ultimate 50 million pound goal.

"Too many people in our communities are suffering unnecessarily and in some cases their lives cut short," said Smith, *Celebrity Fit Club* expert and author of *NY Times* #1 best-seller *The Fat Smash Diet*. "This is why I need your help. Together, through *The Challenge*, we can join hands and influence millions to step up and fight to reverse the deadly health trends posed by obesity. Working together, our reach and influence are greater and our voice is louder. Thanks to sponsor State Farm®, we now offer free interactive tools - including a 30-day diet plan, activity tracker and personal journal - that empower participants with everything they need to make the lifestyle changes that will lead to them to feeling better and looking great."

Smith launched the free national health initiative in April 2007. Backed by hundreds of civic and celebrity champions, mayors, Congress members, national health and civic groups, *The Challenge* is one of the most far-reaching initiatives of its kind. *The Challenge* has already improved the lives of its 690,000+ members who have lost almost three million pounds. Anyone can join and access free resources at [50millionpounds.com](#). Numerous studies show teaming up to lose weight is more effective, and that holds true with *The Challenge*. Participants have formed and joined more than 15,000 teams on the site. Statistics show those who have joined one or more of those teams, are losing nearly 22% more weight than the overall average. For those who want to take on the responsibility of organizing their own teams and/or leading a local grassroots effort, Challenge Leader tools are now available online at [www.50.millionpounds.com/connect](#).

"More than 45,000 people register for the Challenge each month," Smith said. "I want to remind participants, that *The Challenge* is theirs. Sharing individual success is driving the campaign's success by motivating and inspiring others. These sororities and fraternities provide a natural platform from which to extend that message. Too many are dying from preventable weight-related illnesses. We face an epidemic that affects all Americans, especially the African-American community where lives are cut 5 years shorter than the US average."

A study in the July 2007 *New England Journal of Medicine* found that close friends and family set a powerful example for each other - they tend to gain, but can also lose weight together. *The Challenge* aims to help by making it easier to lose the weight. More than 135 million Americans are overweight. Each week, 10,000 die from heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and other illness related to inactivity and diet. African Americans are especially hard hit: 80% of women and 67% of men face higher risk from weight-related diseases.

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For more information, please contact:

Mia Jazo-Harris, [mia.jazo-harris.sfdx@statefarm.com](mailto:mia.jazo-harris.sfdx@statefarm.com), 309-766-5242 (o), 309-533-2011 (cell)

### About The 50 Million Pound Challenge

Dr. Ian Smith's *50 Million Pound Challenge* is an historic opportunity and commitment by the African-American community 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 Americans and hits the African-American community especially hard. *The Challenge*, a campaign supported and endorsed in name and deed by leaders across the community and national civic and health organizations, is sponsored by State Farm.

### About The Council of Presidents

The Council of Presidents is comprised of the chief elected officers of the nine (9) historically Black Greek-Lettered Organizations which include Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is the collaborative body of these member organizations that represents 1.5 million college-trained individuals throughout the United States and abroad.

### 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 *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 is a new dad and lives with his family in Chicago.

### About State Farm:

State Farm insures more cars and homes than any other insurer in the U.S., is the leading insurer of watercraft and is also a leading insurer in Canada. State Farm's 17,000 agents and 68,000 employees serve more than 78 million auto, fire, life and health policies in the United States and Canada, and more than 1.9 million bank accounts. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company is the parent of the State Farm family of companies. State Farm is ranked No. 32 on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies. For more information, please visit [statefarm.com](http://statefarm.com) or in Canada [statefarm.ca](http://statefarm.ca).



### National Council of Presidents

(Sitting From Left to Right): International Grand Basileus Joann Loveless, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.; National President Cynthia M. A. Butler-McIntyre, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; International President Barbara A. McKinzie, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Grand Basileus Sheryl Underwood, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

(Standing From Left to Right): Grand Polaris Larry Frasier, Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc.; Grand Polemarch Dwayne M. Murray, Esq., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Grand Basileus Warren Lee, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; General President Darryl Matthews Sr., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; International President Paul L. Griffin, Jr., Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.



50 Million Pound Challenge founder Dr. Ian Smith and State Farm Marketing Vice President Pam El listen to the comments at the recent luncheon meeting of The Council of Presidents.