



AMERICA TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE TO FIGHT OBESITY Over a Million Americans Join Dr. Ian Smith's 50 Million Pound Challenge to Take Action

NEW YORK, New York, August 6, 2009 – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report has now confirmed that America is in a national obesity crisis. More than one out of three Americans is obese and it's threatening America's well-being, not only as individuals, but as a country.

Fortunately, America is a singularly resourceful and powerful nation when we join together and take a stand. More than 1.3 million people from all 50 states, including government officials, celebrities, and local leaders are already taking charge of their personal wellness by joining Dr. Ian Smith's 50 Million Pound Challenge. The community-based movement is rapidly building momentum and rallying Americans to lose a collective 50 million pounds. This tremendous accomplishment will make an enormous dent in the nation's healthcare crisis.

"America's obesity epidemic requires a multi-faceted approach including individual motivation, accessible free resources, government support, and community involvement," says Dr. Ian, founder and creator of The 50 Million Pound Challenge and *NY Times* bestselling author of *The 4 Day Diet*. "No single person can fight this alone; but with free tools and the motivation of each citizen in every town we can provide each other with a continuously growing support network that a million people have already found in The Challenge."

In the current weak economy, many are trying to shed extra pounds, but when strapped for resources, their personal wellness efforts can become a low priority. The 50 Million Pound Challenge offers Americans the free accessible tools they need to combat obesity at 50MillionPounds.com. In addition, the Challenge provides a dependable support network for all those who participate. It's a winning formula—and cities, churches, civic groups, friends, and families across America are teaming up to help reverse the epidemic of excess weight and turn it into a culture of healthier living.

Now Dr. Ian Smith is also teaming up with communities and leaders across the nation to host the first annual series of Walk Offs on September 12th. Sixteen mayors from leading cities nationwide including Houston, Phoenix and Philadelphia are hosting The 50 Million Pound Challenge grassroots initiative to bring community intervention and support to life. Mayor White of Houston comments, "Houstonians have already begun the fight against diet-driven illnesses through personal initiative; and now with the alarming clarity of the report's fiscal concerns, we have additional accountability to our communities to make a change toward a healthier lifestyle. I strongly encourage Houstonians to come out on September 12th to continue a journey to wellness."

The 50 Million Pound Challenge invites everyone across the nation to join The Challenge Walk Off. Fellow citizens can sign up to host their own walks in their respective cities by logging onto 50MillionPounds.com. The first 50 teams with 50 team members to host a walk on September 12th will receive 50 free t-shirts featuring The Challenge logo.

Anyone can join The Challenge at 50millionpounds.com, the campaign's online support community. The site tallies total pounds lost and offers participants free resources including a 30-day diet plan, online journal, personal weight and activity trackers, and Challenge

teams to make fitness easier and more fun. Currently, more than 37,000 Challenge teams—which anyone can join or start their own—are helping their members lose 23 percent more weight than the overall campaign average. Already the site has helped more than 1.3 million people “Give up the pounds not the fight,” and shed a collective 4.6 million pounds. For more information on The 50 Million Pound Challenge Walk Offs please visit 50MillionPounds.com.

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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.
