



SIXTEEN MAYORS ACROSS THE COUNTRY PARTNER WITH DR. IAN SMITH AND CHALLENGE THEIR COMMUNITIES TO FIGHT OBESITY

September 12 Walk Offs Inspire Communities to a Healthier Life.

NEW YORK, New York, August 17, 2009 - More than 1.3 million people have already joined the online community at 50millionpounds.com, and the momentum is building! The 50 Million Pound Challenge is now teaming up with sixteen mayors across the nation to take on obesity starting with the September 12th Walk Offs. As powerful first steps toward a healthier lifestyle, the walks unite people in their own communities and bring them together with others across the country to raise awareness about America's number one health issue – obesity and illnesses that stem from being overweight, such as type 2 diabetes, stroke, heart disease, high blood pressure, and even some forms of cancer.

Dr. Ian Smith, founder and creator of The 50 Million Pound Challenge and *NY Times* bestselling author of *The 4 Day Diet* is inviting all cities 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 12 will receive 50 free t-shirts featuring The Challenge logo.

At the recent [National Conference of Mayors](#), Dr. Ian Smith encouraged the mayors to use The Challenge and its free resources as a platform for addressing the health concerns of their citizens. "Time and time again, we hear from our Challengers that community support is the key ingredient in their success," says Dr. Ian Smith. "With The Challenge Walk Off, entire communities are coming together as part of The Challenge's commitment to helping the whole country become more focused on personal physical well-being. I applaud the mayors of these cities for their leadership. We are not simply talking about obesity, we are finally doing something about it." Alexandria, VA Mayor William Euille says, "A city that is physically fit and healthy contributes to the fiscal well being of the city. I want to lead by example."

Two-thirds of Americans are overweight, and for the first time ever, new reports show that there are more obese people in the country than there are those who are merely overweight. Studies show that in the weak economy many are trying to shed extra pounds, but when strapped for resources, personal wellness efforts can become a low priority. The Challenge enables people to follow their own diet and gives them completely free resources and tools to succeed.

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 those on teams lose 23 percent more weight than the overall campaign average.

The site has already helped more than 1.3 million people shed a collective 4.6 million pounds 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.

For more information on The 50 Million Pound Challenge Walk Off please visit 50MillionPounds.com. The 50 Million Pound Challenge is free and sponsored by State Farm®.

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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*, a campaign supported and endorsed by leaders across the community and national civic and health organizations, is sponsored by State Farm®.

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.

About State Farm

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