



news **release**



Arkansas Department of Health
Keeping Your Hometown Healthy



Arkansas
BlueCross BlueShield
An Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Looking for a Healthy Lifestyle Change? Register Now for the Blue and You Fitness Challenge!

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (January 12, 2012) — Registration for groups for the 2012 Blue and You Fitness Challenge is now under way, and companies, schools, peer groups and workout buddies can join in the fun!

The Blue and You Fitness Challenge encourages participants to work toward the public health recommendation of 30 minutes of physical activity each day, most days of the week. The exercise competition has grown from two entities in 2004 to more than 180 groups competing in 2011. More than 9,900 participants in 33 states took part in the 2011 Challenge.

The Challenge begins March 1 and runs through May 31. Groups have until January 31 to register. A designated team leader (or group administrator) will need to sign up the group on the Challenge Web site, **BlueAndYouFitnessChallenge-ark.com**. Individuals (age 13 and up) who want to participate in that Challenge group can go to the Web site and register in February.

During the competition, participants can access the Challenge Web site to log their exercise and track their progress. The Blue and You Fitness Challenge also has a Facebook and Twitter page to share motivational tips, exercise ideas and fun stories to help participants stay committed.

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Participants in the Challenge in previous years have not only reported weight loss, but also reported lowering their blood sugar levels, their cholesterol, their systolic blood pressure and their diastolic blood pressure.

The Challenge is hosted by Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Department of Human Services. For more information, call 1-800-686-2609 or log on to BlueAndYouFitnessChallenge-ark.com.

Founded in 1948, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is the largest health insurer in Arkansas. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 2,700 employees. If combined, the 39 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health care coverage for 93 million – nearly one in three – Americans.

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is a centralized health department, operating health units in each of the state's 75 counties. County governments provide facilities and support for the clinical, environmental and home health services offered by the agency. The mission of the Department is to promote public health policies and practices that assure a healthy quality of life for Arkansans. ADH works to protect, improve and promote the health of all Arkansans with the support of more than 5,000 dedicated employees and public and private partners. During each year, Department employees monitor and investigate public health disease and threats, provide preventative and personal health services in clinical and in-home settings, provide education and enforce laws and regulations, support Hometown Health Improvement, promote healthy behaviors, respond to public health emergencies and educate and monitor industries that impact the public's health.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services provides a wide range of social services to more than a million Arkansas citizens each year through its programs and private providers. DHS is the largest department of the executive branch of state government. It has more than 7,000 employees and consists of ten divisions and four support offices. DHS maintains offices in each of the state's

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75 counties where a person can apply for all the services DHS offers. Services are provided to people from all walks of life and all ages. Major programs, which fall under the Arkansas Department of Human Services, include the federal Food Stamp program and the Medicaid program, which accounts for the largest part of the department's \$4 billion annual budget.