



Inspire the World to Fitness®

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Fitness Professionals are a Crucial Link to Healthcare Reform

Prevention and consumer education are keys to tamping down obesity statistics and getting back on track.

San Diego – November 9, 2009 – With debate over [healthcare reform](#) raging in Washington and obesity statistics showing that people fatter and sicker than ever, could there be a more pertinent topic for Americans to begin taking more seriously? *IDEA Fitness Journal* recently distilled some of the main challenges we face as a nation regarding healthcare and wellness and has provided some clear cut solutions—namely, the roles that fitness and wellness professionals should have in any blueprint that ultimately gets drafted for healthcare reform.

While it appears that as a nation we are finally progressing from a sick-care strategy toward investment in prevention and wellness programs to help Americans live longer and healthier lives, most people—including healthcare providers and insurance companies—are just catching up to what fitness professionals have been evangelizing for years: a balance of good diet, regular exercise and clean living point toward longevity and improved quality of life, as well as significant savings on the nation's spiraling healthcare spending.

Here are some disturbing [obesity statistics](#) that fitness professionals can and will have a direct impact on:

- Obesity is associated with a 36% increase in healthcare spending (more than smoking or problem drinking).
- Obesity costs private U.S. companies \$45 billion annually in medical expenditures and work loss (Barrington & Rosen 2008).
- Sixty percent of companies have either changed or plan to change their healthcare strategy (Watson Wyatt 2009).
- Companies that have succeeded in controlling healthcare spending have saved nearly \$60 million since 2004, with financial incentives and effective delivery of information being the two (of five) most important factors (Watson Wyatt 2009).
- Fifty percent of companies have or will introduce or increase investments in wellness and health promotion in 2009 and 2010 (Tahmincioglu 2009).

“Even though the statistics regarding fitness levels and obesity are extremely discouraging, there is still much to be hopeful and enthusiastic about, especially with the level of attention now being paid to preventive care by our president and government,” says IDEA executive director Kathie Davis. “Even though policymakers and others are more willing than ever to change the way they look at health and healthcare spending, quite a few challenges exist that must be acknowledged and dealt with. As with any difficult issue, these are simply challenges awaiting solutions. In order to create solutions, you need to know what it is you’re solving.”

You can access the full article “The Wellness Culture: Self-Responsibility at Last,” by Alexandra Williams, MA, in the IDEA Online Library: <http://www.ideafit.com/fitness-library/the-wellness-culture-self-responsibility-at-last-1>.

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of fitness and wellness professionals with more than 23,000 members in over 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided personal trainers, group exercise instructors, fitness program directors, mind-body teachers, health club owners and fitness center managers with pertinent information, health and fitness educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective lifestyle and fitness programs. IDEA members interact with consumers more than 25 million times a year in the fitness marketplace. For more information on IDEA fitness and wellness conferences, publications, professional fitness education and products, member services and other activities, visit [IDEA Health & Fitness Association](#).