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**IDEA Health & Fitness Association Endorses Standardization
For the Advancement of all Professional Fitness Trainers**

*Consumers to Benefit from Establishment of Industry-wide Set of Standards
To Provide a Consistently High Level of Education and Experience*

San Diego – Nov. 15, 2004 -- IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the leading membership organization of health and fitness professional worldwide with nearly 20,000 members in more than 80 countries, endorses the growing trend to establish procedures for standardizing certified Professional Fitness Trainers (PFTs) nationwide.

PFTs are rapidly gaining the trust and confidence of growing numbers of health-conscious consumers. While once thought of as a luxury only affordable for the rich and famous, today PFT services are regarded among the most popular and profitable programs at many health and fitness clubs.

Currently, there are a diverse and growing number of organizations in the United States that bestow a variety of personal fitness certifications. In order to maintain consistency in PFT education and experience while ensuring the highest standards of quality certifications, the fitness industry is advancing on several levels to “certify the certifiers” and determine the best approaches for securing the future well being of the entire profession.

According to Kathie Davis, executive director and co-founder of IDEA Health & Fitness Association, the steps being taken to create a PFT certification standard are positive for the industry. “We are very supportive of creating some set of standards that will be beneficial to both the personal trainer profession and the fitness industry as a whole,” she said. “IDEA believes the industry will move to a national set of certification or licensure standards, but we remain convinced that we must proceed carefully and deliberately. Otherwise, we are risking the livelihoods of tens of thousands of dedicated PFTs who have the knowledge and capability but might lack the ‘proper’ certification or endorsement.”

The latest events in this intriguing topic are the focus of an article titled “Navigating PFT Certifications,” which was published recently in *IDEA Fitness Journal*. Written by Shirley Archer, an internationally recognized wellness educator based at Stanford University’s School of Medicine, the feature explores the issues currently being debated by leading authorities and organizations in the health and fitness industry.



“Industry leaders cannot ignore increased consumer demand for competency assurance, increased risk of liability and increased scrutiny of the industry by state legislators,” wrote Archer in the article. “To respond, industry leadership must proactively pursue steps that will help.”

For example, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) has recommended that by the end of 2005 its 4,500 member clubs in the U.S. hire only PFTs who possess at least one current certification from an organization or agency that has obtained third-party accreditation of its procedures from an independent nationally recognized accrediting body.

Third-party accreditation means that the organization providing a certification exam is reviewed by an objective, unrelated third party, which evaluates the validity of the test and its examination procedures. IHRSA has identified the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accreditation body of the National Organization for Competency Assurance (NCCA), as an acceptable third-party authority. With a 26-year history as a recognized leader in the field of accrediting certifying organizations, the NCCA recommendation is gaining momentum. While IHRSA has stated that it will consider bringing in other accreditation organizations at a later time, there are some industry groups that have expressed misgivings about the process and initial recommendations.

Clearly, the standardization of PFT certifications is one of the major issues facing the fitness industry. “We applaud IHRSA’s leadership role in working with other organizations to reach consensus in developing this recommendation,” added Davis. “With IHRSA’s recommendation, fitness facilities are taking the initiative to assure high standards for personal trainers as consumer demand for PFT services continue to grow.”

Going forward, Davis believes the increased need for such high standards will be driven by health insurers and the medical community as they look to fitness professionals for help with battling obesity, diabetes and other conditions brought on by sedentary living. “Ultimately, these standards will serve as the basis for reimbursements and referrals from healthcare providers,” she concluded.

As the informative article states, the industry is reaching a new stage in its evolution, while becoming more sophisticated and gaining greater legitimacy. Archer theorizes “the demand for fitness professionals... is sure to push future growth in creating standards for both training and certification... Now, more than ever, if you have a passion for this profession, you can create the job of your dreams.”

About IDEA Health & Fitness Association

IDEA Health & Fitness Association is the world’s leading membership organization of health and fitness professionals, with nearly 20,000 members in more than 80 countries. Since 1982, IDEA has provided health and fitness professionals with pertinent information, educational opportunities, career development programs and industry leadership while helping them enhance the quality of life worldwide through safe, effective fitness and lifestyle programs. For more information on IDEA events,



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