



Indian Health Service Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Indian Health Service Teams with Nike to Promote Healthy Lifestyles for American Indians and Alaska Natives

Albuquerque, N.M. – Today the Indian Health Service (IHS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nike to collaborate on the promotion of healthy lifestyles and healthy choices for all American Indians and Alaska Natives. The MOU is a voluntary collaboration between business and government that aims to dramatically increase the amount of health information available in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The goal of the MOU is to help those communities gain a better understanding of the importance of exercise at any age, particularly for those individuals with diabetes.

“Regular physical activity contributes to better health by reducing obesity and the many chronic conditions associated with it, including increased diabetes and heart disease,” Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. “This new partnership will serve American Indian and Alaska Native communities by expanding the information available on the importance of physical activity.”

The mission statements of many sports companies like Nike share a common basis for collaborative activities with the IHS and other federal agencies. That basis is the improvement of the health and fitness of every American.

“Overweight and obesity are the fastest-growing causes of preventable disease and death in America and are contributing factors in diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and poor cholesterol levels,” stated Charles W. Grim, IHS Director. “Nearly 13 percent of the Indian population is affected by diabetes and this campaign can help promote positive changes in the health issues associated with these and many other illnesses and diseases in American Indian communities.”

“Nike’s mission is to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world, and we believe that if you have a body, you are an athlete. We’ve brought that mission to Indian lands through several programs this year,” said Nike’s Native American Business Manager Sam McCracken, who is a member of the Fort Peck Tribes (Sioux and Assiniboine) in northeastern Montana. “Our signature community affairs program, NikeGO, aims to get kids active. In addition, we have developed a Nike Native American Diabetes program as part of our multi-cultural business development strategy to increase our involvement with Native American communities through new and innovative programs that address key issues and concerns. This partnership with the IHS is a further extension of this effort.”

For further information about the MOU or on collaborating with the IHS on activities to benefit the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives, contact Leo Nolan at 301-443-7261.

For more information about Nike contact Jill Zanger at 503-532-0316.



NOTICE TO EDITORS: For additional information on this subject, please contact the IHS Public Affairs Office at 301-443-3593. Additional information about the IHS is available on the IHS website <http://www.ihs.gov> and <http://info.ihs.gov>

