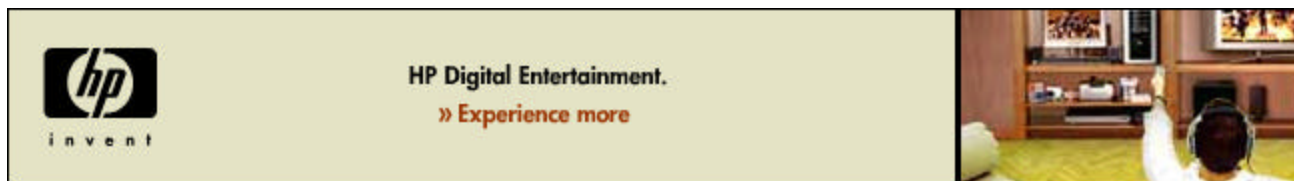


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N.M. Challenges Residents to Get Healthy

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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SANTA FE (AP) -- State officials have issued a challenge to New Mexicans: Start working out and eating right.

The New Mexico on the Move Challenge was issued Wednesday by Health Secretary Patricia Montoya and Lt. Gov. Diane Denish at a park here.

The goal is to see which community's residents can make the greatest strides toward improving their physical fitness.

“This challenge is a direct attack on obesity,” Montoya said.

Health officials estimate about 57 percent of New Mexicans are overweight.

“This is not about a particular diet,” Montoya said. “This is about watching what you eat and getting moving.”

The challenge is part of the department's First Steps Toward Building a Healthy New Mexico initiative.

“Getting in shape doesn't have to be a chore,” Montoya said. “It can be fun and that's what we're hoping to achieve with the New Mexico on the Move Challenge. We're encouraging entire communities to come up with fun and innovative ways to get their neighbors off the couch and get moving.”

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“Children's Lett

Espanola Mayor Richard Lucero and Las Vegas Mayor Henry Sanchez have already accepted the challenge on behalf of their cities.

The challenge officially begins in September.

Denish said obesity affects children and adults.

"Obesity is plaguing children in New Mexico. As adults, we must exercise, eat right and set a healthy example for our kids. They deserve every chance to live quality lives without the risks of serious health issues in the future," Denish said.

America on the Move is taking a different approach to weight loss by encouraging people to move so they don't gain more weight, said Jeanie Hosken, coordinator for the state affiliate of the initiative.

Americans gain an average of two pounds a year. Walking an extra 2,000 steps -- one mile -- daily will prevent that weight gain, she said.

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