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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April is National Public Health Month

This year's theme is 'A Healthier America Begins Today: Join the Movement'

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, April 16, 2012 – This year's focus is on creating communities that are more aware of the importance of taking preventive measures through our campaign '**A Healthier America Begins Today: Join the Movement.**' "Individuals can live healthier and longer lives by taking steps to prevent diseases before they happen," states Steve Markham, Director/Health Officer.

Nearly 1 million Americans die every year from diseases that could be prevented. Eating less, eating healthier foods, and exercising regularly can go a long way toward helping Americans lessen their risk for heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Did You Know?

- Fewer than 15 percent of adults and 10 percent of adolescents eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Nearly two-thirds of the adult population is overweight or obese. Approximately one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their sixth birthday, and over half of obese children became overweight at or before age 2.
- Physical inactivity is a primary contributor to one-third of the adult population being overweight or obese and one in six children and adolescents being obese.
- At least 40 percent of adults and 80 percent of adolescents do not meet the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans published by the US Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines are available online at: <http://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/default.aspx>.
- In combination with healthy eating, physical activity can help prevent a range of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer and stroke, which are the three leading causes of death in America.

Together we can change these statistics and live longer and healthier lives. Small changes can help. Taking action to promote active living and healthy eating is more than just common sense — it works.

Here are just a few examples:

Start small . . .

- Eat more fruits and vegetables, consume less sugar and fat, eat healthier snacks, watch portion size and eat together as a family.
- Eat less by avoiding oversized portions, make half of the plate fruits and vegetables, make at least half of the grains whole grains, switch to fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, choose foods with less sodium and drink water instead of sugary drinks.

- Take part in “Let’s Move!” activities. “Let’s Move!,” launched by first lady Michelle Obama, is a comprehensive initiative dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation.
- Engage in physical activity every day. Aim for a total of 60 minutes for children, 30 minutes for adults.
- Supplement aerobic activities with muscle strengthening activities that involve all major muscle groups on two or more days a week.
- Support walk and bike-to-school programs and work with local governments to make decisions about selecting school sites that can promote physical activity.
- Plan family trips to parks and other outdoor locations.
- Post information about National Public Health Month (NPHM) on your Facebook page, blog or Twitter account and share with friends and family, how you are working to live a more active and healthy life.
- Submit a letter to the editor to your local newspaper in response to a recent article that underscores the importance of active living and healthy eating during NPHM and beyond.

There is much more you can do to help promote active living and healthy eating. By raising awareness of prevention within your community during NPHM, you can help members of your community live healthier and longer lives.

For more information visit the American Public Health Association’s website at www.apha.org. If you have questions regarding public health issues or are looking for public health services please call the Health Department at 774-1868 or 265-9913.

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