

# Exercise is Medicine® Month 2016



Toolkit

[www.exerciseismedicine.org](http://www.exerciseismedicine.org)



### The Problem

Physical inactivity is a fast-growing public health problem and contributes to a variety of chronic diseases and health complications, including obesity, diabetes and cancer. In addition to improving a patient's overall health, increasing physical activity has proven effective in the treatment and prevention of chronic diseases. Even with all the benefits of physical activity, in the United States and many other countries, levels of inactivity are alarming. We are facing what is now referred to as an "inactivity epidemic," with tremendous costs.

- According to the World Health Organization's most recent Global Health Risks data (2004) after high blood pressure, tobacco use and high blood glucose, physical inactivity constitutes the 4th leading cause of death globally, with about 3.3 million attributed deaths per year. More recent evidence (2009) using direct measure, rather than survey data shows physical inactivity to be the leading cause of death in the U.S.
- More than half of adults (56 percent) do not meet the recommendations for sufficient physical activity in the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines.
- In a study of older adolescents and adults in the U.S., participants spent almost eight hours a day in sedentary behaviors, while as much as 36 percent of adults engaged in no leisure-time physical activity at all.
- A study in 2008 shows that physical inactivity costs the U.S. Health Care System \$330 per person each year, which equals more than \$102 billion dollars annually.
- 40 percent of U.S. primary care doctors and 36 percent of U.S. medical students do not meet 2008 federal physical activity guidelines. Physically inactive doctors are less likely to provide exercise counseling to patients and provide less credible role models for the adoption of healthy behaviors. Not surprisingly, only 34 percent of U.S. adults report having received exercise counseling at their last medical visit.

### The Benefits

Many research studies have shown the benefits of regular physical activities. The U.S. Federal Physical Guidelines and many studies show that 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity physical activity is required to achieve these health benefits.

- Research shows that a low level of physical activity exposes a patient to a greater risk of dying than does smoking, obesity, hypertension, or high cholesterol, and for older men, regular physical activity can decrease the risk of death by 40 percent.
- Active individuals in their 80s have a lower risk of death than inactive individuals in their 60s.

Regular physical activity can:

- Reduce mortality and the risk of recurrent breast cancer by approximately 50 percent.
- Lower the risk of colon cancer by over 60 percent.
- Reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by approximately 40 percent.

- Reduce the incidence of heart disease and high blood pressure by approximately 40 percent.
- Lower the risk of stroke by 27 percent.
- Lower the risk of developing type II diabetes by 58 percent.
- Be twice as effective in treating type II diabetes as the standard insulin prescription and can save \$2250 per person per year when compared to the cost of standard drug treatment.
- Can decrease depression as effectively as Prozac or behavioral therapy.
- Adults with better muscle strength have a 20 percent lower risk of mortality (33 percent lower risk of cancer specific mortality) than adults with low muscle strength.
- A low level of fitness is a bigger risk factor for mortality than mild-moderate obesity. It is better to be fit and overweight than unfit with a lower percentage of body fat.
- Regular physical activity has been shown to lead to higher SAT scores for adolescents.
- In an elementary school setting, regular physical activity can decrease discipline incidents involving violence by 59 percent and decrease out of school suspensions by 67 percent.

### Co-Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise

- Improvement of individual health and quality of life.
- Economic savings through reduced health care costs (and, for active transport, saving on auto expenses).
- Reduced environmental impact through active transport.
- Increased work productivity, reduced absenteeism; worker cooperation, attitude, etc.
- Higher academic achievement among students.
- Improved cognitive function in children, youth, adults & older adults.

### Reference:

EIM Fact Sheet at <http://bit.ly/EIMFactSheet>

### A Solution to the Greatest Public Health Problem of the 21st Century

Exercise is Medicine® (EIM), a global health initiative managed by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) is focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other health care providers to include exercise when designing treatment plans for patients. EIM is committed to the belief that exercise and physical activity are integral to the prevention and treatment of chronic disease and should be regularly assessed as part of medical care. Along with the National Physical Activity Plan, EIM strives to make physical activity a "vital sign" that is routinely assessed at every patient interaction with a health care provider. Former U.S. Surgeon General Regina Benjamin, M.D., M.B.A., serves as honorary chair of EIM.

## Guiding Principles of Exercise is Medicine®

The guiding principles of Exercise is Medicine®, are designed to improve the health and well-being of our nation through a regular physical activity prescription from doctors and other health care providers, or from a health fitness professional working with the health care provider.

The guiding principles are as follows:

- Exercise and physical activity are important to health and the prevention and treatment of many chronic diseases.
- More should be done to address physical activity and exercise in health care settings.
- Multi-organizational efforts to bring a greater focus on physical activity and exercise in health care settings are to be encouraged.

### A Critical Call to Action

EIM calls on each person and all partners dedicated to the idea that exercise truly is medicine to continue to build, support and advocate for physical activity as essential for global health and wellbeing by committing to action. Policy makers are called to change policy to support physical activity as a vital sign for health. Health care providers and fitness professionals are called to integrate exercise into every patient and client interaction. Communities, workplaces and schools are called to promote physical activity as an essential part of health and wellbeing.

## Exercise is Medicine® Month Background Information

### Rx for Health: A Daily Dose of Exercise!

#### *May is Exercise is Medicine® Month*

Health advocates and public officials around the world are getting it, with growing movements on six continents. In the U.S., with alarming increases in chronic diseases and consternation over health care costs, many see the EIM initiative as part of the solution.

That philosophy is the seed for EIM Month. During May, communities throughout the U.S. will hold activities that recognize physical activity and exercise—shown to help prevent and treat more than 40 chronic diseases—should be part of everyone’s health care plan. Since 2010, EIM Month has been proclaimed by mayors, governors, Congress and the President. Individuals and organizations of all kinds, from youth groups to universities, churches, fitness centers, corporations and hospitals, hold events aimed at keeping people active and healthy.

This year, EIM Month will focus on the role of the health care provider within EIM and the impact they can have on their patients’ physical activity levels. Health care providers have an opportunity to impact their patients’ physical activity levels as they are often an individual’s first point of contact in regard to matters of health and have a large reach into different population groups that present many different health issues[1].

The health care provider is an important component in achieving the vision of EIM:

- Have health care providers assess every patient’s level of physical activity at every clinic visit
- Determine if the patient is meeting the U.S. National Physical Activity Guidelines
- Provide patients with brief counseling to help him/her meet the guidelines and/or refer the patient to either healthcare or community-based resources for further physical activity (PA) counseling.

Though EIM is a global initiative, EIM Month is a grassroots, community-based phenomenon. Families and advocates—anyone who “gets it”—are empowered to encourage healthy lifestyles and help make physical activity part of everyone’s health care plan. From physicians who prescribe exercise to public officials seeking to control health care costs to parents who want to keep their kids healthy, EIM Month is a time to put into action what research has shown to be true.

“Everyone should start or renew an exercise program now as an investment in life-long health,” said Robert E. Sallis, M.D., FACSM, chair of EIM. “Every person, regardless of age or health, is responsible for his or her own physical activity. There are far more reasons to exercise than excuses not to.”

## Exercise is Medicine® – The Role of the Health Care Provider

Physical activity is a key component in achieving a healthy lifestyle and disease prevention. In contrast, physical inactivity accounts for a significant proportion of premature deaths worldwide. Health care providers are in a unique position to provide such expertise to their patients and employees in helping them develop healthy lifestyles by actively counseling them on being physically active.

EIM offers health care providers many different resources to achieve the vision of EIM in their clinical setting and to achieve the mission of EIM, which is focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other health care providers to include physical activity when designing treatment plans for patients and referring their patients to EIM Credentialed Exercise and Exercise Professionals.

### EIM Health Care Provider Action Guide

The Health Care Provider Action Guide will provide you with specific guidance in working with all of your patients, regardless of their level of readiness to make change in their lives. We know that your time is limited and that every minute counts. This action guide will empower you to maximize your time with your patients by helping you:

1. Assess the current PA levels of your patients.
2. Develop and use exercise prescriptions based on the health status and current activity level of your patients; and
3. Refer your patient to a certified exercise professional.

Key tools provided to you in the Health Care Providers Action Guide include:

- Simple tips for starting the conversation about PA with your patients
- Safety screening tools and instructions
- Physical Activity Vital Sign (PAVS) questionnaire
- EIM Physical Activity Prescription Pad and referral tools to help get your patients to qualified exercise professionals
- Guidance on developing a network of qualified and trusted exercise professionals

## EIM Health Care Provider Summary Sheet

The summary sheet provides a snapshot of the Health Care Providers Action Guide in a quick and easy downloadable one-pager.

## EIM Prescription Pad

EIM has recently released its newest version of the EIM Exercise Prescription Pad. The EIM Rx Pad assists physicians in providing their patients with a basic exercise prescription in an easy-to-use format. There are two printable versions available to physicians to allow for easier use and distribution with their patients.

**To see all of our HCP Resources, visit <http://bit.ly/EIMHCPResources>.**

## Take the EIM Pledge

As a health care provider, you have the ability to impact your patients in becoming more physically active and combat the development of chronic disease and disability. The EIM Pledge is designed to empower and assist healthcare providers in taking specific action steps in helping their patients to move toward healthier lifestyles. To take the EIM Pledge, visit <http://bit.ly/EIMPledge>.

## Other Ways to Be Involved

### The EIM Solution – Share EIM with Your Health System and Community Leaders

To jointly address the rapid progression of chronic diseases and skyrocketing health care costs, EIM and ACSM, along with the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the Medical Fitness Association (MFA) announced in February 2016 a new collaboration called the Exercise is Medicine Solution. The partnership and the EIM Solution will bring together health care systems, clinicians, fitness professionals and community resources to affect positive health outcomes and reduce health care costs. To learn more about the EIM Solution, visit <http://bit.ly/EIMSolution>.

## EIM Credential

EIM now includes a credential program that will provide exercise professionals with the opportunity and skills to work closely with the medical community and will provide additional benefits for the EIM credentialed professional. This credential will:

- Be a respected credential for those who work with individuals who are healthy, individuals with health-related conditions who have been cleared by their physicians for exercise (Level 1 or 2), and patients who require clinical support and monitoring (Level 3);
- Supply healthcare providers with a system to validate the qualifications of exercise professionals who are eligible to work with their patients; and
- Offer an opportunity for exercise professionals to promote their services to healthcare providers and to develop or cultivate patient referrals on a regular basis.

For more information on the EIM Credential and how to get signed up, visit <http://bit.ly/EIMCredential>.

## References:

[1.] Diehl, K., Mayer, M., Mayer, F., Gorig, T., Bock, C., Herr, R. M., & Schneider, S. (2015). Physical activity counseling by primary care physicians: attitudes, knowledge, implementation, and perceived success. *Journal of physical activity & health*, 12(2).

## Exercise is Medicine® on Campus Facts

EIM-OC is designed to engage universities and colleges, their students, faculty, and staff in ongoing efforts to improve physical fitness, health and wellness across campus with the possibility for community outreach. The EIM-OC guiding principles include:

- Introducing EIM to universities/colleges and providing them with an opportunity to make a commitment supporting EIM and to collaborate in bringing EIM onto their campuses and into their local communities
- Providing universities/colleges with an opportunity to learn what other institutions are doing to promote physical activity and the health benefits on their campuses
- Recognizing campuses who are actively engaged and championing EIM on their campus

## Get Involved

Visit Exercise is Medicine® online at <http://bit.ly/1PktdPX> to support the initiative and receive program updates. Download the EIM-OC Action Guide, which provides tips and tools to implement EIM on your campus and get your school moving.