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Acting Surgeon General Promotes “Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future” in South Carolina

Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H., made another stop on his nationwide tour today in Columbia, S.C to promote the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention Initiative. The initiative promotes the benefits of healthy lifestyles for America's young people.

The Healthy Youth for a Healthy Future initiative brings attention to communities throughout the nation that are coming together to address childhood overweight and obesity prevention. The project also recognizes local programs that use creative approaches to encourage kids to eat right and exercise with a Surgeon General's Champion Award.

Rear Admiral Galson presented the Surgeon General's Champion Award to the Eat Smart Move More South Carolina program during an event with students at the Rosewood Elementary School. In addition to the Champion Award ceremony, Lt. Andy Baldwin, M.D., a physician and lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, and also known for being the bachelor of the tenth season of the reality show “The Bachelor,” led the students in a physical activity exercise.

“The nation's epidemic of childhood overweight and obesity threatens the future of our youth,” said Galson, a rear admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service. “Whether you work in community programs, focus on policy, or are a role model for one specific child, you have the influence to make a difference. I am pleased to be here today and congratulate Eat Smart Move More program for their accomplishments and ongoing commitment to helping the children of South Carolina lead healthier lives.”

Eat Smart Move More South Carolina is a state-wide collaboration involving schools, government, businesses, health care organizations and other community leaders to support healthy eating and active living where South Carolinians live, learn, work and play. This collaboration has resulted in new farmers markets to help increase fruit and vegetable consumption and providing children safer walking routes to schools to promote physical activity.

Following the event at the school, Rear Adm. Galson will deliver the keynote address to the 2009 South Carolina Obesity Prevention Summit. In the afternoon, Rear Adm. Galson will participate in a roundtable discussion on childhood obesity with representatives from the South Carolina Department of Health, academia, health care providers, and local businesses.

Childhood overweight is a serious health concern for children and adolescents in the United States. Since 1980, obesity has more than doubled among children ages 2 to 5 years old and more than tripled among youth ages 6 to 11 and adolescents ages 12 to 19. Additional information on the Surgeon General's Initiative can be found at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/index.html>.

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