

MISSISSIPPI IN MOTION – GOVERNMENT IN MOTION

Mississippi in Motion is a state-wide initiative designed to promote healthy lifestyles through exercise, proper nutrition, and social support created by the MSU Extension Service. The program concept came from a tremendously successful effort in West Point, Mississippi, in which approximately 1,000 community members participated and collectively lost over 6,000 pounds. Following this success, the program was refined and piloted in ten additional counties. The successes of these pilot projects mirrored those in West Point. This program is now brought to Mississippi State Government as *Government in Motion!*

The 12 week program begins with a registration session that is coupled with a health fair, during which participants' weight, height, body mass index, and blood pressure are recorded. The State Department of Health is providing cholesterol and glucose screenings. Over the following 10 weeks, participants attend weekly educational sessions on different healthy living topics. During the final week, the participants weigh in and enjoy a celebration.

One important aspect of the program is peer support. Participants are encouraged to form teams of five members that become a support network during the program. The teams set goals and encourage each other toward success. Many of the participants said this was a key element in staying on course toward their goals.

Program objectives include the following: a) Participants are encouraged to eat 5 to 9 serving sizes of fruits and vegetables a day and to follow the USDA MyPyramid guidelines; b) Participants are asked to participate in 30 minutes of some type of physical activity on a daily basis, unless their doctor indicates otherwise, and c) Participants are encouraged to attend 7 out of 10 educational sessions to help them meet these objectives. When individuals follow these objectives they have success in bringing about positive behavior changes and improve their overall quality of life.

TEAM APPROACH

Participants are encouraged to form teams of five friends, co-workers, or family members with which they regularly interact. This team approach is a vital component to the success of the program. The team provides social support, encouragement, and accountability to those who may need a little extra boost along the way. Also, if one person is unable to attend an education session, a team member can provide a bridge to that information by picking up an extra set of handouts and sharing the information. Many participants in the pilot projects said this team support was a key component of their success.

REGISTRATION AND WEIGH-IN

During the registration and weigh-in session, participants will register and provide simple baseline information. The information includes contact information, team participation, and personal data including weight, height, body mass index, and blood pressure. The Department of Health will check your cholesterol and glucose levels for Mississippi In Motion – Government In Motion participants. In addition, participants will be asked to complete a short survey indicating levels of activity and general eating habits. Each person will be given an identification number. This number will be used on all pages containing personal data rather than using a person's name. This allows for complete confidentiality for all information provided.

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EDUCATION SESSIONS

Each education session is designed to involve a 30-minute lesson with a 15-minute question and answer period for a total of 45 minutes each week. This time frame works well for a “lunch and learn” setting, or for a quick information session at the end of a workday. DFA employees will get an additional twenty minutes if they attend the educational session to take care of normal lunch time responsibilities!

WEIGH OUT AND CELEBRATION

During the final week of the 12-week program, participants return to weigh in and complete a final short survey. Results from each team are tallied and prepared for the celebration. Communities will have some freedom in planning their celebration events. Many of the pilot communities solicited small prizes from local organizations and awarded them during the celebration. Others provided certificates to teams or individuals that met their goals. The idea is to have fun and celebrate success!

HOW DO I JOIN?

Form a team with friends or co-workers and come up with a name for your team. Teams can have from 3 to 5 team members. Participants pay a \$5 fee which is used for prizes to be awarded at the end of the twelve week program. **Team Forms should be completed and turned in no later than August 18, 2008 to the receptionist at 1301 Woolfolk Building, Suite A.** The \$5 fees should be turned in with the Team Form.