



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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## **SCHOOL FITNESS SUMMIT FOCUSES ON COMBATING CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

*County and Schools Work Together To Encourage Better Physical Activity for Students*

Ron Roberts, Vice Chairman of the County Board of Supervisors, The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), HealthLink, and the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego have teamed up to bring together hundreds of education leaders and health and physical fitness experts this week for a summit on increasing physical activity opportunities for youth on school campuses. The School Fitness Summit seeks to address the issue of childhood obesity, a nationally recognized public health crisis.

"Preventive steps must be taken to address our very real problem with childhood obesity and physically unfit children in our county and throughout the nation," said Vice Chairman Roberts, who in January helped unveil the San Diego County Childhood Obesity Action Plan. "It is up to parents and school leaders, county government, health experts and the community to take positive steps to prevent childhood obesity."

This summit takes place Thursday, March 2, at the Town and Country Resort, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., followed by a reception with California Senator Tom Torlakson, the closing speaker and champion of childhood obesity prevention efforts around the state.

School board members, superintendents, principals, district health, wellness and physical education leaders and others will meet to discuss strategies to promote improved physical activity throughout the school environment. The keynote speaker, Jean Blaydes Madigan, is an internationally known educational consultant and author on the subject of how brain research supports the need for movement in learning.

"Our County's Health and Human Services Agency is committed to working with our community partners to combat childhood obesity in San Diego County," said Jean Shepard, Director, HHSA. "One of the goals of this important summit is to ensure that school leaders are aware of the many County and community-based programs and resources available to them to help develop healthier campuses."

Several awards will be presented at the summit. Among them, local professors and researchers Drs. Thom McKenzie and James Sallis will be recognized for their scientific contributions with the "Community Champion for Student Fitness Award." Primary sponsors of the Summit include Vice Chairman Roberts, the County Health and Human Services Agency, The California Endowment, Health Net, Kaiser Permanente and the San Diego Chargers, along with a number of supporting sponsors.

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