

Special Olympics Health Promotion



Health Promotion uses interactive educational tools and displays, motivational literature and demonstrations to raise the awareness of Special Olympics athletes about the need to improve and maintain an enhanced level of wellness and self-care. Health Promotion interviews athletes to assess their health habits, and conducts health screenings in three key areas: body mass index based on height and weight, blood pressure, and bone mineral density. **Health Promotion is by design fun, interactive, positive and engaging.** In this environment, we help athletes learn how small changes in their behavior can help them improve and maintain good health and sports performance.

Importance and Impact:

Health Promotion events indicate a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes have limited knowledge of proper health practices and many suffer from potentially serious health issues.

Out of SONJ athletes screened:

- **91.7%** of SONJ adult athletes have weaker bones than normal
- **75.9%** of SONJ adult athletes are overweight or obese
- **44.8%** of SONJ youth (less than 20 years of age) are overweight or obese
- **14.6%** of SONJ adult athletes indicated they suffer from second hand smoke

Criteria for Clinical Director:

Individuals interested in acting as a Clinical Director for Health Promotion events should have the following qualifications and skills:

- Dietician, Physician, Nurse Practitioner, Nurse, Physical Therapist, Health Educator or individual with Public Health background
- Ability to work with local program to determine event opportunities and evaluate programming
- Recruit and train volunteer health professionals
- Obtain equipment, supplies, and athlete giveaways
- Set up and supervise Healthy Athletes venue
- Collect and report data

Purpose of the Screening :

The mission of Special Olympics Health Promotion is to improve the quality of life and long-term health of Special Olympics athletes and people with intellectual disabilities through healthy behaviors, screenings and medical referrals when appropriate.

Objectives of Health Promotion are to:

- Encourage and enhance healthy behaviors, such as eating fruits and vegetables, handwashing and sun safety
- Reduce risky behaviors, such as smoking and poor nutrition
- Improve self-efficacy and self-advocacy
- Deliver screening services, and increase the investment of health promotion leaders for people with intellectual disabilities

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