



Wellness Week 2012 | **Welcome**

Welcome! We are happy to make available to you this Wellness Week 2012 Communications Toolkit.

Wellness Week, September 17-23, will coincide with the Pan American Sanitary Conference and the first anniversary of the UN High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). Wellness Week was officially launched in September 2011, by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Economic Forum, to emphasize the importance of the built and natural environment and socioeconomic conditions that modify risk factors for NCD and reverse health inequities among vulnerable populations and promote prevention and active living in the Americas.

Wellness Week will be celebrated in many cities in the Americas this year. However, more needs to be done to expand its popularity and to institutionalize healthy municipalities. As always, it is our hope that we can provide our partners with the tools and information to better assist you in your efforts to promote Wellness Week locally.

Highlights of the 2012 kit include:

- Wellness Week backgrounder
- NCDs fact sheet
- Sample press release
- Sample letter to the editor
- Talking points
- Social media messages
- Wellness Week logo

Thank you for your support, and the best of luck to you in your efforts to promote and celebrate Wellness Week 2012.



Wellness Week 2012 | **Background**

Wellness Week, September 17-23, 2012, coincides with the Pan American Sanitary Conference and the first anniversary of the UN High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). Wellness Week grew out of Caribbean Wellness Day and was launched in New York City in 2011. Wellness Week will be celebrated in many cities in the Americas this year, but more needs to be done to expand its popularity and to institutionalize healthy municipalities.

A first-ever Wellness Walk will be in Washington, DC on September 23. This event will join Fiesta DC, the major annual Latino Festival featuring 38 folkloric dance troupes, international cuisine, music, and a Parade of Nations.

In September 2011, the UN High-Level Meeting called for action to stop a burgeoning NCD epidemic and its potentially catastrophic economic consequences. WHO has consistently advocated for collaboration across sectors and stakeholders. The Pan American Health Organization's Pan American Forum for Action on NCDs harnesses multi-stakeholder action to combat cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, and the obesity epidemic.

The recent global financial crisis, and resulting pressures on government budgets, have increased the partnership imperative. Globally, the economic impact of NCDs is set to reach a staggering \$30 trillion over the next twenty years. NCDs are both a cause and an effect of poverty. However, change in settings, behaviors, health systems, and policies can prevent up to 80 percent of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes and 40 percent of cancers, preventing billions in economic losses.

Physical inactivity is a significant global risk, with an impact as severe as smoking or obesity. Sedentary behavior, chronic disease, poverty and socio-economic development are interrelated, necessitating a "systems" approach to reducing the rise of NCDs and reversing inequities that cause chronic disease among the most vulnerable. The American College of Sports Medicine, PAHO, the CDC Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and the World Bank, have therefore come together to identify opportunities for public/private partnerships that lie in combatting physical inactivity.

The science is clear: a sedentary lifestyle is not compatible with health. Indeed, it is the fourth leading cause of death in the world.

- In the USA, for every two obese people, there are three who are insufficiently active.
- In Latin American countries, 30% to 60% of the population does not achieve even the minimum recommended levels of physical activity.
- Chronic diseases in 2002 accounted for 44% of deaths among men and women below the age of 70 years and contributed to almost 50% of disability-adjusted life years lost in the Region.
- Obesity has grown by almost 400% in just 20 years.

"Because even moderate physical activity such as walking and cycling can have substantial health benefits, understanding strategies that can increase these behaviors in different regions and cultures has become a public health priority," states Gregory Heath, DHSc, of the American College of Sports Medicine. "We now face an 'inactivity epidemic,' with tremendous costs."

Physical inactivity is a broad and complex subject. A “health in all policies” approach will help us move beyond the health sector in producing lifestyle changes. We need “healthy schools”, “healthy communities,” and “healthy worksites.”

At the heart of Wellness Week is a vision of cities with more sidewalks, green spaces, trails and pathways. We seek a world where doctors empower patients through physical activity prescriptions and counseling, where schools offer children the opportunity to move and play, and where workplaces recognize that physical activity is business-relevant.



Wellness Week 2012 | **Noncommunicable Diseases Fact Sheet**

- Wellness Week is September 17-23, 2012
- Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) – mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes – are the biggest cause of death worldwide.
- More than 36 million people die each year from NCDs.
- 63 percent of all deaths worldwide (36 million out of 57 million global deaths) are due to NCDs.
- More than 9 million of all deaths attributed to NCDs occur before the age of 60.
- Nearly 80 percent of all NCD deaths due occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Premature deaths among women due to NCDs range from as high as 58 percent, in low-income countries, to as low as 6 percent, in high-income countries, leading to growing inequalities between countries and populations.
- Implementing cost-effective interventions that reduce risk factors for NCDs will contribute up to two-thirds of the reduction in premature mortality. In addition, health systems that respond more effectively and equitably to the health-care needs of people with NCDs can reduce premature mortality by another one-third up to one-half.
- NCDs are largely preventable by means of effective interventions that tackle shared risk factors, namely: tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol.
- It is the estimated cost of inaction due to current losses in the national product of developing countries resulting from NCDs and shrinking workforce that curtails economic growth.
- NCDs are not only a health problem but a development challenge as well. They force many people into, or entrench them in poverty due to catastrophic expenditures for treatment.
- Eliminating major risks could prevent most NCDs. If the major risk factors for chronic disease were eliminated, at around three-quarters of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes would be prevented; and 40 percent of cancers would be prevented.
- NCDs are largely preventable by means of interventions that tackle the four risk factors for NCDs: tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol.



Wellness Week 2012 | **Talking Points**

Wellness Week is September 17-23 – a time to recognize the value of active and healthy living. With your knowledge of the issues at hand, you can help improve the overall wellness of our community, create a culture of well-being and support a wellness movement for more active and healthy communities worldwide.

Wellness Week was officially launched in September 2011, by the Pan American Health Organization and the World Economic Forum, to emphasize the importance of the built and natural environment and socioeconomic conditions that modify risk factors for NCDs; and reverse health inequities among vulnerable populations and promote prevention and active living in the Americas.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are among our largest and most urgent global health problems, responsible for more than half of all deaths worldwide. The most common NCDs—heart disease, strokes, diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease—cause three out of five deaths annually.

There are proven, cost-effective interventions that can prevent NCDs and reduce their effects. Smoking prevention, promotion of healthy eating and physical activity and access to essential health care can significantly improve health and save lives.

Eliminating major risks can prevent most NCDs. Change in settings, behaviors, health systems, and policies can prevent up to 80 percent of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes and 40 percent of cancers, preventing billions in economic losses.

Non-communicable diseases are largely preventable by means of interventions that tackle the four risk factors for NCDs: tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol.

Wellness Week is a great opportunity to recognize and celebrate our successes as individuals, as well as challenge ourselves to build a better future.

Physical inactivity is a significant global risk, with an impact as severe as smoking or obesity. Sedentary behavior, chronic disease, poverty and socio-economic development are interrelated, necessitating a “systems” approach to reducing the rise of NCDs and reversing inequities that cause chronic disease among the most vulnerable.

In addition to increasing early death rates, NCDs also increase healthcare costs, affect development, lower the quality of life and decrease well-being. Globally, the economic impact of NCDs is set to reach a staggering \$30 trillion over the next twenty years.

At the heart of Wellness Week is a vision of cities with more sidewalks, green spaces, trails and pathways. We seek a world where doctors empower patients through physical activity prescriptions and counseling, where schools offer children the opportunity to move and play, and where workplaces recognize that physical activity is business-relevant.



Wellness Week 2012 | **Sample Press Release**

For Immediate Release
(date)

Contact: (Insert Name)
(Insert Contact's Phone and Email Address)

With 36 Million Deaths Credited to Noncommunicable Diseases, Worldwide Health Experts Hope National Wellness Week Will Help

(INSERT CITY) – As a part of National Wellness Week, September 17-23, 2012, the Pan American Health Organization, Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the World Economic Forum and American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) are collaborating to develop a social movement on healthy settings for healthy living and increase awareness among individuals, policy makers, communities and employers. Health leaders aim to raise awareness of non-communicable diseases (NCD), educate individuals about the risk factors for NCDs and promote prevention.

Non-communicable diseases include mainly:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancers
- Diabetes
- Chronic respiratory diseases

While not the only NCDs, these four account for the majority of NCD-related avoidable deaths and share the common risk factors of physical inactivity, inadequate diet, tobacco use, and the harmful use of alcohol.

NCDs are responsible for more than half of all deaths in the world. WHO states that:

- More than 36 million people die each year from NCDs (63 percent of all deaths worldwide)
- More than 9 million of all deaths attributed to NCDs occur before the age of 60
- 80 percent of premature heart disease, stroke and diabetes can be prevented

In addition to increasing early death rates, NCDs also increase healthcare costs, affect development, lower the quality of life and decrease well-being.

(QUOTE FROM HEALTH LEADER)

-more-

“Wellness Week” focuses on raising awareness around the risk factors of NCDs, and preventative measures which can be taken to moderate these factors. The following is a brief list of the main risk factors of NCDs.

Behavior Risk Factors

- Physical inactivity
- Unhealthy diets
- Harmful alcohol consumption
- Tobacco use

Biological Risk Factors

- Raised blood pressure
- Raised cholesterol
- Raised blood sugar
- High body mass index (BMI)

Environmental Risk Factors

- Carcinogens and pollutants – water, air, second-hand smoke
- Limited access to health food: drinkable water, fresh fruit and vegetables
- Unlimited access to inexpensive, non-nutritive unhealthy foods
- Urban design for an active living: walkable sidewalks, parks and plazas, access to comfortable and adequate public transportation
- Lack of housing, buildings and schools favorable to active living, accessibility to water, fresh food and transportation
- Closed and open spaces free of tobacco smoke

During “Health Week” health leaders are encouraging action from individuals, communities, policy makers and employers.

Individuals: take action to make healthy life style choices that lead to prevention of NCDs by:

- Increase physical activity
- Encourage healthy diets
- Limit alcohol use
- Eliminate tobacco use
- Seek appropriate preventive care

Policy makers: create public policies and environments supportive of healthy living and making the healthier choices the easier option, For example:

- Increase access to affordable, healthy food: drinkable water, fresh fruit and vegetables
- Create urban design for an active living: walkable sidewalks, parks and plazas, access to comfortable and adequate public transportation
- Create closed and open spaces free of tobacco smoke
- Limit carcinogens and pollutants – water, air, second-hand smoke

Employers and employees: challenge organizations to create products and services supportive of health, and promote workplace wellness, which include policies and an organizational culture which creates supportive workplace environments for healthy living.

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Wellness Week 2012 | **Sample Letter to the Editor**

To the Editor:

Wellness is essential to our quality of life, which is why during Wellness Week (September 17-23) I encourage you to recognize the value of active and healthy living. With your knowledge of the issues at hand, you can help improve the overall wellness of our community, create a culture of well-being and support a wellness movement for a more active and healthy (name of city).

Reports indicate that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are among our largest and most urgent global health problems, responsible for more than half of all deaths worldwide. The most common NCDs—heart disease, strokes, diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease—cause three out of five deaths annually.

In addition to increasing early death rates, NCDs also increase healthcare costs, affect development, lower the quality of life and decrease well-being.

It is my belief that communities across the globe can successfully create initiatives that would ultimately prevent and reduce the impact of these devastating diseases. They are, in fact, preventable. There are proven, cost-effective interventions that can prevent NCDs and reduce their effects. Smoking prevention, promotion of healthy eating and physical activity and access to essential health care can significantly improve health and save lives.

Wellness Week is a great opportunity to recognize and celebrate our successes as individuals, as well as challenge ourselves to build a better future.

By addressing NCDs today and focusing on their underlying environmental causes, through actions such as requiring smoke-free workplaces, increasing access to healthy foods, building safer streets and creating infrastructure that supports physical activity, we can make substantial differences.

During Wellness Week, health leaders are encouraging action from individuals, communities, policy makers and employers. Why not do something today that may help solve our common health problems and build healthier places?

This week, I challenge policymakers and public health agencies to take action and protect and promote the health of our residents. At the same time, I encourage individuals to make healthier choices that can lead to a better quality of life.

Name
Title
Organization



Wellness Week 2012 | **Social Media Suggest Posts**

Facebook

Did you know that September 17-22 is National Wellness Week? This is a great time to ask yourself if you're healthy? Are you taking simple steps that will make a big difference in your health? This week make it a point to get active, eat healthy and make healthy choices.

During National Wellness Week be more aware of the four noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) that are killing more than 36 million people die each year: heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes – and make it a point to make healthy choices.

Did you know that the four risk factors for noncommunicable diseases are tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol – and these are all preventable! Get well. Be well.

Eliminating major risks could prevent most noncommunicable diseases. If the major risk factors for chronic disease were eliminated, nearly 3/4 of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes would be prevented; and 40% of cancer would be prevented. Those are great reasons to be healthy.

September 17-23 is National Wellness Week. Each year, about 36 million worldwide die from noncommunicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease and diabetes. This week, take a moment to reflect on those who have been affected by these diseases and make personal choices to be healthy. Get well. Be well.

Twitter

Sept. 17-23 is National #WellnessWeek. Are you due for a check-up? Call your physician to find out! Get well. Be well.

36 million people die annually from heart disease, cancer, lung disease and diabetes. Don't be next. Get well. Be well. #WellnessWeek

This week do something. Move. Eat healthy. Stop smoking. Get well. Be well. #WellnessWeek

80% of premature heart disease, stroke and diabetes can be prevented. #WellnessWeek

Support healthy living. #WellnessWeek