



Washington

wants to know



Let Uncle Sam Know You Need A Partner In Fitness

(NAPSA)—If you think Uncle Sam should help us stay healthy, you're not alone. Most Americans think he should. In fact, a national survey commissioned by the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) found that three-fifths of Americans say the government should do more to promote physical activity. And a little more than half say Uncle Sam just isn't doing enough.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, six out of 10 Americans are overweight or obese, and the prevalence of obesity has jumped from 15 percent to a hefty 32.9 percent since 1980. The culprits? Poor diet and inactivity.

The increase in America's waistline comes at a high price. Not only does it compromise the health of individuals, but it increases the nation's health care costs and lowers our overall productivity.

"What we need is a culture that supports exercise and healthy living," says Joe Moore, IHRSA president and CEO. "The government can play a lifesaving role by creating a public policy environment that champions Americans' own personal efforts to preserve their health."

Currently, there's some encouraging legislation making its way around Congress:

- The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Bill (H.R. 245) would allow people to pay for exercise, physical fitness programs, certain exercise equipment, and children's sports league fees with pretax dollars. That means you



Uncle Sam can help Americans stay fit by making off-site fitness membership tax free for employees.

could save 25 to 30 percent a year on your fitness-related costs because they wouldn't be paid for with taxable income.

- Another proposal in Congress, the Workforce Health Improvement Program (WHIP) Act (H.R. 1748 and S. 1038), promotes wellness in the workforce by making off-site fitness center memberships tax free for employees when provided as an employee benefit. Current law requires workers to pay income tax on such wellness benefits.

What's Your Opinion?

Seven in 10 Americans say they'd encourage their member of Congress to pass PHIT, and three-quarters of Americans say they'd encourage WHIP. Are you one of them? To encourage your member of Congress to pass PHIT or WHIP, visit www.healthclubs.com and click on "Take Action!" under "Exercise Your Rights!"