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FITNESS INDEX


WELLPOINT
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-NEWS RELEASE-

For immediate release

May 23, 2011

MINNEAPOLIS-ST. PAUL TOPS LIST OF HEALTHIEST, FITTEST METRO AREAS

Twin Cities Unseat Washington, D.C. in ACSM American Fitness Index™;

\$172,000 Grant to Improve Health in Two Metro Areas
INDIANAPOLIS – For the first time, Minneapolis-St. Paul is the healthiest, fittest metropolitan area in the United States, according to the American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) annual [American Fitness Index™](#) (AFI).

The 2011 AFI data report, "Health and Community Fitness Status of the 50 Largest Metropolitan Areas," evaluated the most populous city areas to identify the healthiest and fittest places in the United States. Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington edged out previous leader Washington, D.C. for the top spot this year with a score of 77.2 (out of 100 possible points).

Minneapolis-St. Paul and Washington, D.C. (respectively ranked three and one in 2010) both improved their scores this year; however, the Twin Cities took the lead thanks to greater improvements in healthy behavior measures and a reduction in the percentage of smokers.

Several factors contributed to the Twin Cities' ranking, including a relatively low smoking rate, an above-average percentage of exercising residents and moderate-to-low rates of chronic health concerns such as obesity, asthma, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. While the area reduced park-related expenditures this year, its percentage of parkland is still above average, as is the percentage of recreational facilities (other than swimming pools). Farmers markets in the area also increased this year, indicating a trend in healthier eating.

How Metro Areas Can Use the AFI Rankings

"The scores and rankings from the report indicate which metro areas are more fit and which ones are less fit," said Walter Thompson, Ph.D., FACSM, chair of the AFI Advisory Board.

"Although Minneapolis ranked first, there is room for improvement. At the same time, even the lowest-ranked areas have healthy residents and community resources supporting health and fitness."

The AFI data report reflects a composite of preventive health behaviors, levels of chronic disease conditions, health care access and community resources and policies that support physical activity.

"A regular, scientific evaluation of the infrastructure, community assets, policies and opportunities which encourage healthy and fit lifestyles is imperative for cities wishing to provide a high quality of life for residents," said Thompson. "Community health leaders and advocates in each metro area can use the AFI data report to easily identify their strengths and areas of opportunity."

Grant to Provide Technical Assistance at the Metro Level

ACSM received a \$171,880 grant from the WellPoint Foundation to present the 2011 AFI data report and establish pilot programs to improve health. Now, by translating key data from the AFI

report, ACSM will provide technical assistance to low-ranking metro areas to help them improve health and fitness in their communities.

“As the founding sponsor of the ACSM American Fitness Index, the WellPoint Foundation is proud to be a continuing supporter of this healthy lifestyle measurement and improvement endeavor,” said Dr. Wesley Wong, regional vice president and national medical director of WellPoint’s affiliated health plans and member of the AFI Advisory Board. “Our involvement with ACSM and the AFI program illustrates our commitment to enhancing health improvement efforts across the country and allows us to be a stronger community partner in the states we serve.”

In 2011, the WellPoint Foundation grant will enable ACSM to work with community organizations in Indianapolis and Oklahoma City to pilot locally driven health improvement efforts. Four additional cities will be added in 2012 and 2013 respectively, bringing the total to ten cities that will receive tailored technical assistance from ACSM to improve the health of their communities.

This new programmatic effort will identify actionable areas with the best evidence for improving health, focus on doing the most good for the most residents – with a high priority on underserved populations – and work to make a community-wide impact quickly.

“There are no quick fixes when it comes to improving the health of an entire metro area,” said Wong. “However, our hope is that these pilots will identify some key strategies and tactics that may also work in other cities hoping to improve the health of their residents.”

The WellPoint Foundation’s support for the ACSM and AFI report is part of its continuing commitment to address health disparities and improve public health across the country. Through its State Health Index – a state-by-state compilation of public health measures – and Healthy Generations program, the WellPoint Foundation works to identify the issues most in need of attention and then directs its charitable support and volunteer efforts toward improving health in those areas. Reducing cardiac mortality rates, promoting active lifestyles and addressing the long-term health threats posed by childhood obesity are major focus areas of the Foundation.

The metropolitan rankings included in the 2011 AFI report are:

Rank	Metropolitan Area	2011 Score	2010 Rank	2010 Score
1.	Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.	77.2	3	71.7
2.	Washington, D.C.	76.8	1	73.5
3.	Boston, Mass.	69.1	2	72.6
4.	Portland, Ore.	67.7	5	70.4
5.	Denver, Colo.	67.6	6	69.9
6.	San Francisco, Calif.	66.8*	8	64.7
7.	Hartford, Conn.	66.8*	9	64.4
8.	Seattle, Wash.	66.5	4	70.5

10.	Sacramento, Calif.	65.3	7	65.8
11.	San Jose, Calif.	65.2	14	61.0
12.	Richmond, Va.	64.2	11	62.7
13.	San Diego, Calif.	63.3	13	62.0
14.	Cincinnati, Ohio	60.3	12	62.5
15.	Salt Lake City, Utah	59.8	15	60.6
16.	Austin, Texas	57.8	10	63.9
17.	Pittsburgh, Pa.	55.5	23	52.0
18.	Atlanta, Ga.	55.2	16	57.7
19.	Providence, R.I.	55.1	18	57.2
20.	Baltimore, Md.	53.7	20	53.5
21.	Milwaukee, Wis.	51.8	27	49.2
22.	Kansas City, Mo.	51.5	29	47.9
23.	Buffalo, N.Y.	50.2	28	49.2
24.	Raleigh, N.C.	50.0	22	52.4
25.	Cleveland, Ohio	49.6	25	51.0
26.	St. Louis, Mo.	49.3*	37	40.5
27.	Philadelphia, Pa.	49.3*	26	50.4
28.	Chicago, Ill.	48.9	33	47.0
29.	Orlando, Fla.	48.6	19	55.5
30.	New York, N.Y.	48.3	21	52.9
31.	Jacksonville, Fla.	46.7	24	51.2
32.	Phoenix, Ariz.	45.3	32	47.4
33.	San Antonio, Texas	45.0	43	36.9
34.	New Orleans, La.	43.9	41	37.7
35.	Miami, Fla.	43.1	39	39.9
36.	Charlotte, N.C.	42.3*	34	44.0
37.	Nashville, Tenn.	42.3*	31	47.8
38.	Columbus, Ohio	42.2	35	42.8
39.	Dallas, Texas	41.3	40	39.5
40.	Tampa, Fla.	40.4	30	47.8
41.	Los Angeles, Calif.	39.1	38	40.5
42.	Houston, Texas	38.3	42	37.6
43.	Las Vegas, Nev.	37.8	45	35.3
44.	Riverside, Calif.	36.8	36	42.8
45.	Indianapolis, Ind.	34.4	44	35.9
46.	Detroit, Mich.	33.8	47	31.9
47.	Birmingham, Ala.	33.6	49	31.2
48.	Memphis, Tenn.	32.9	48	31.6
49.	Louisville, Ky.	29	46	32.5
50.	Oklahoma City, Okla.	24.6	50	24.3

**Scores have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a point, resulting in some apparent ties; however, the rankings are based on the full, calculated scores that were not equal in those cases.*

About the ACSM American Fitness Index Program and Report

To assist with measurement and to provide a baseline measure of health and fitness status, ACSM worked with the Indiana University School of Family Medicine and a panel of 26 health and physical activity experts on the methodology of the AFI data report. Researchers analyzed the data gleaned from U.S. Census data, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), The Trust for the Public Land City Park Facts and other existing research data in order to give a scientific, accurate snapshot of the health and fitness status at a metropolitan level.

The data examined fall into two categories: 1) personal health indicators; and 2) community and environmental indicators. Visit the online newsroom at www.AmericanFitnessIndex.org for a complete list of the data components.

-30-

The [American College of Sports Medicine](http://www.AmericanCollegeOfSportsMedicine.org) is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. More than 40,000 international, national and regional members and certified professionals are dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine.

The [WellPoint Foundation, Inc.](http://www.wellpointfoundation.org) is a private, non-profit organization wholly funded by WellPoint, Inc. Through charitable contributions and programs, the Foundation promotes WellPoint's inherent commitment to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that WellPoint's affiliate health plans serve. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These disease states and medical conditions include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company's annual associate giving campaign and provides a 50 percent match of associates' campaign pledges. To learn more about the WellPoint Foundation please visit www.wellpointfoundation.org.