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**THE 50 MILLION POUND CHALLENGE ANNOUNCES ONE-MILLIONTH MEMBER**

*The Free Health Initiative founded by Dr. Ian Smith Reaches National Milestone*

New York, NY- March 24, 2009—In just under two years, *The 50 Million Pound Challenge* has rallied more than a million Americans to come together to ‘Give up the pounds, not the fight.’ In doing so, those individuals have improved their lives and health and logged more than 3.8 million pounds lost at [50millionpounds.com](http://50millionpounds.com).

“The number one health crisis facing all Americans is being overweight,” said physician and *Challenge* founder Dr. Ian Smith. “Weight loss is an epidemic that touches all races and ethnicities and *The Challenge* is devoted to each and every American who is struggling with weight loss.”

*The Challenge* offers consumers a free, easy to use online solution that truly works. All resources and tools, including a 30-day customizable diet plan, online journal, personal weight and activity trackers and *Challenge* teams make fitness easier and more fun, and are free thanks to sponsor State Farm®.

Online community support is key. In fact, [a study in the February 2009 issue of the \*New England Journal of Medicine\*](#) found that group support and community is a key factor in a successful weight-loss plan. Among the study of several weight-loss programs, attendance at group sessions was positively associated with weight loss. In a separate study, 66% of adults (ages 35-44) agree that an online weight-loss community could provide just as much or more support to individuals trying to lose weight. *Challenge* statistics also show that registrants who have joined one of more than 26,000 teams on the site are losing an average of 23% more weight than those who have not teamed up.

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Following on the heels of the one-millionth registrant milestone and to help address the growing attention cities are paying to the health of their citizens due to correlated health care costs, Dr. Ian Smith has announced he is working with the mayors of several cities across the country to stage *The 50 Million Pound Challenge Annual Walks*. On May 16, 2009, people across the country will join together in their individual communities to take part in the walks and take the symbolic steps signifying their journey to a healthier lifestyle.

For more details on *The 50 Million Pound Challenge*, visit [50millionpounds.com](http://50millionpounds.com).

**About The 50 Million Pound Challenge:**

Dr. Ian Smith's 50 Million Pound Challenge is a national health initiative encouraging people to come together and take control of their health by getting fit, losing excess weight and turning back the deadly toll of weight-related diseases that threaten nearly half of Americans and hits the African-American community especially hard. The Challenge is a free campaign supported by national civic and health organizations and sponsored by State Farm®. It is helping cities, churches, civic groups, friends and families team up to help reverse the epidemic of excess weight and turn it into a culture of healthier living.

**About Dr. Ian Smith:**

Dr. Ian Smith is diet expert on *VH1's Celebrity Fit Club*, contributor to *The View*, and a former editor of *Men's Health*. He hosts his own nationally syndicated radio show *HealthWatch* on *American Urban Radio Networks*, has written for *Time*, *Newsweek*, *New York Daily News* and has been featured in *People*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *Cosmopolitan* and *University of Chicago Medicine on the Midway*. He is author of 5 books, including #1 NY Times bestsellers *The Fat Smash Diet* and *Extreme Fat Smash Diet*, and the new *The 4Day Diet*.

**About State Farm:**

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