

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UPMC HEALTH PLAN LAUNCHES *WE CAN!* TO COMBAT YOUTH OBESITY

*Pittsburgh Named **We Can!**™ City*

PITTSBURGH (November 29, 2007) – UPMC Health Plan, in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh, Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Children’s Community Pediatrics, the Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh, and H.J. Heinz Company, today launches **We Can!** (**W**ays to **E**nhance **C**hildren’s **A**ctivity & **N**utrition!), a program from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to address the growing obesity epidemic facing our nation’s youth. Across the country eight cities will simultaneously host **We Can!** events, including a national media event featuring the Surgeon General in Boston, MA. The other cities are Los Angeles; New York; Las Vegas; Memphis; Oak Ridge, TN; Rockford, IL; and Carson City, NV.

UPMC Health Plan will be working with the partner agencies to develop programming focused on healthy eating and active lifestyles for the youth of Western Pennsylvania. **We Can!** was designed so that local civic groups, parent groups, churches, and others can implement activities in their communities. **We Can!** reaches parents and caregivers in home and community settings with educational materials and activities, including a new course for parents, a website (<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>), a parent handbook in both English and Spanish, several youth programs, and community events and projects.

“The **We Can!** program empowers parents in Western Pennsylvania with innovative resources to help their families maintain healthy lifestyles,” said Diane P. Holder, President of UPMC Health Plan. “We are proud to be part of this initiative to help youth in our region achieve better health.”

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The **We Can!** Pittsburgh program will be launched at the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and will feature remarks by Mayor Luke Ravenstahl; Susan Shurin, deputy director, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute; Diane P. Holder, president, UPMC Health Plan; Jane Werner, executive director, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh; Roger Oxendale, president, Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC; Dr. Kiran Bhat, physician, Children's Community Pediatrics; and Idamarie Laquatra, Ph.D., R.D., director, global nutrition, H.J. Heinz Company. To celebrate the kickoff, children will participate in a special physical fitness activity.

"The National Institutes of Health developed **We Can!** to introduce research-based information and strategies to teach children how to adopt behaviors that can help them maintain a healthy weight," notes Dr. Susan Shurin, deputy director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) at NIH. "We are pleased to announce that Pittsburgh has joined **We Can!** as our fifth **We Can!** City. Through the efforts of communities like Pittsburgh, we can make a difference."

As part of the **We Can!** City Program, NIH provides technical assistance on planning and implementing **We Can!** in the participating cities, as well as science-based programs for youth and parents, and strategies for implementing programs, creating partnerships, and gaining public visibility. Each city has pledged to offer **We Can!** evidence-based obesity prevention programs to both parents and youth in collaboration with community-based partners. In addition, each city will distribute **We Can!** tips and information to city employees. To date, more than 450 community sites in 44 states have committed to use **We Can!** program materials and organize classes and events.

We Can! is a science-based, national education program developed by the National Institutes of Health -- a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services -- to help children ages 8-13 stay at a healthy weight by improving food choices, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time. **We Can!** is unique among existing youth obesity-prevention initiatives in its focus on reaching parents and families as a primary group for influencing young people.

About UPMC Health Plan

UPMC Health Plan, the second-largest health insurer in Western Pennsylvania, is owned by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), one of the nation's top-ranked health systems.

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The integrated partner companies of the UPMC Insurance Services Division – which includes UPMC Health Plan, Work Partners, EAP Solutions, UPMC *for You* (Medical Assistance), and Community Care Behavioral Health – offer a full range of group health insurance, Medicare, CHIP, Medical Assistance, behavioral health, employee assistance, and workers' compensation products and services to nearly 1 million members. Our local provider network includes UPMC as well as community providers, totaling more than 80 hospitals and more than 7,500 physicians in a 29-county region. For more information, visit www.upmchealthplan.com.

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