



Mayors Wellness Campaign
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For Immediate Release: June 6, 2007

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NEW YORK GIANTS JOIN NEW JERSEY'S FIRST "MAYORS HEALTHY COOK-OFF"

18 MAYORS TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR CULINARY SKILLS IN PARSIPPANY ON JUNE 6TH

Trenton – Parsippany Hills High School football star and New York Giant defensive back R.J. Cobbs will join 18 mayors from throughout North and Central New Jersey at the first-ever Mayors Wellness Campaign "Mayors Healthy Cook-Off" from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Wednesday June 6th at the Parsippany Police Athletic League building (33 Baldwin Road, Parsippany, NJ).

Cobbs has consented to join Dr. Sonia Hartunia-Sowa, a food scientist from St. Elizabeth's College, Debra Freschl, representing the Morris Area Wellness Partnership, and Michael Hudson, President, Northeast Region, Aetna Health Care Deliver, as "taste testers" to determine which mayors have prepared the best dishes in three categories: healthiest, tastiest and best presentation. The New York Giants top community goal is fighting childhood obesity and encouraging physical fitness. The effort is part of the National Football League's "What Moves U" initiative, a national youth movement and awareness campaign designed to promote physical fitness and healthy living. The New York Giants have launched the program in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut middle schools, making improving childhood physical fitness their primary objective in the community.

R. J. Cobbs was a star at Parsippany Hills High School, about a 30-minute ride from Giants Stadium. At the University of Massachusetts, Cobbs played running back, wide receiver and cornerback. He played in nine games with seven starts as a cornerback as a junior in 2004, then switched to offense as a senior, when he rushed for 302 yards and caught 14 passes.

The Mayors Healthy Cook-Off is sponsored by the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute, the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the Morris Area Wellness Partnership and Aetna.

Mayors from across North and Central New Jersey will participate in a competition to see who can prepare the healthiest dish as part of an effort to promote healthier living and more active lifestyles.

The event will also focus on getting our children active and on the path to healthy living. Children's events include: the popular music video game "Dance Dance Revolution;" free Double Dutch jump rope lessons; free t-shirts, free pedometers, free dance demonstrations by local dance troupes; and the chance for five lucky attendees to win one of five I-Pod shuffles which will be given away.

The 18 mayors who have agreed to participate are: Kevin Walsh (Washington), Woody Kerkeslager (Madison), Michael Luther (Parsippany), Gene Feyl (Denville), Michael Obremski (Randolph), Bill Chegwidan (Wharton), Domenick Stampone (Haledon), Donald Cresitello (Morristown), Brian Levine (Franklin Township), Arthur Ondish (Mt Arlington), Sophie Heymann (Closter Borough), Ken Gabbert, (Upper Saddle River), Ed Zimmerman (Rocky Hill), Art Daughtry (Montville), William Horton (Peapack Gladstone), Patricia Flannery (Bridgewater), James Dodd (Dover) and Cyril Wekilsky (Boonton).

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In addition to the event sponsor, Aetna, the Mayors Wellness Campaign has partnered with the American Cancer Society, The College of Saint Elizabeth, Rutgers Co-operative Extension, the Morris Area Wellness Partnership, the Township of Parsippany-Troy Hills, Subway, Kraft (East Hanover Division), and the New Jersey State League of Municipalities, the Parsippany Police Athletic League, the New York Giants and WMTR radio.

The Mayors Wellness Campaign is an initiative of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute (www.njhcqi.org) in partnership with the New Jersey State League of Municipalities (www.njslom.org). Major funding has been provided by Aetna and BeneCard. Additional funding has been provided by the New Jersey Department of Transportation, St. Francis Hospital, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital – Hamilton, Johnson & Johnson, Pennoni Associates, Pfizer and Bayville Holdings, LLC. The Voorhees Transportation Center at Rutgers University, the Regional Plan Association and the Ramapo College Nursing Program were instrumental in the research and development of the MWC during its initial stages.

The MWC supports mayors as champions of community health. The goal is to increase opportunities for New Jersey residents to participate in daily physical activity with a long-term goal of reducing health care costs secondary to obesity. Through public-private partnerships, the MWC provides structure and resources for healthy community initiatives. By encouraging mayors to play a leadership role in supporting local opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles, the intent of the MWC is to improve health and make New Jersey a national leader in community-based health interventions.

Last spring, each of the 566 mayors in New Jersey's municipalities were mailed the MWC "Toolbox," a manual designed to guide them through the implementation of wellness programs in their communities. Broken down into four major sections – Youth in Motion; Employees in Motion; Seniors in Motion; and Communities in Motion – the Toolbox outlines programs that can be directly used in every community in New Jersey. The Toolbox can also be found on the MWC website at www.mayorswellnesscampaign.org.