



SPAULDING
REHABILITATION
HOSPITAL
NETWORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT:

Tim Sullivan, Communications and Media Relations
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network
(617) 573-2904, (617) 573-2909 FAX
tsullivan11@partners.org

Spaulding and Harvard at forefront of new Federal Physical Activity Guidelines with *Exercise is Medicine*TM Initiative

Boston- On October 7th members of the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Medical Association, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports and others will join the Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt as the "Federal Recommendations for Physical Activity" are announced at a press conference in Washington DC.

"This is the first time our federal government has addressed head on the growing epidemic of physical inactivity and the resulting crisis of obesity from the perspective of using exercise as a key medical tool," says Dr. Edward M. Phillips, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School, Director of Outpatient Medical Services at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network and Founder and Director of the Institute of Lifestyle Medicine.

"The new guidelines appear to be an attempt to address roughly two-thirds of the American population, people who do not participate regularly in moderate intensity activity."

Spaulding and the Harvard Medical School have long been committed to these initiatives. Dr. Phillips is a member of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and one of 13 Task Force members working on the American Medical Association and ACSM joint initiative called *Exercise is Medicine*TM, which calls for physicians to treat physical activity as a vital part of their patients' overall health. According to Phillips, *Exercise is Medicine*TM encourages physicians to assess physical activity levels in patients and to "prescribe" exercise as appropriate.

"A recent study noted that physicians often fail to counsel their hypertensive patients on the benefits of regular exercise," Phillips said, citing a report published recently in *Ethnicity & Disease*. "This is an important finding, since uncontrolled hypertension can lead to stroke, coronary heart disease and even death. When physicians did advise their hypertensive patients to exercise, the vast majority, 71% of these patients, did increase their physical activity levels."

A key component to instituting the new federal guidelines in a meaningful way is a commitment from doctors to prescribe exercise to their patients. The *Exercise is Medicine*TM program has a website and

several programs, including a forthcoming textbook, to help accomplish this. In addition, the Institute of Lifestyle Medicine is sponsoring online courses and live seminars through Harvard Medical School to teach physicians how to prescribe exercise.

“The trick is getting people to understand that they don’t need to run marathons to be healthier,” Phillips says. “Instead, they need to consciously and deliberately add moderate physical activity into their day.”

“Really, they just need to get off the couch and take a brisk walk around the block,” Phillips says. “Getting started exercising is definitely the hardest part, but it is very rewarding.”

Phillips cites studies showing the numerous benefits of exercise, including feeling happier and more energetic.

“In most cases exercise is truly the best medicine we can prescribe,” adds Phillips.

About the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network

A member of Partners HealthCare, The Spaulding Network includes its main campus, a 196-bed facility, located in Boston, MA, and eight outpatient sites throughout the Greater Boston area. Spaulding is a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School as well as the official rehabilitation hospital of the New England Patriots. Spaulding is the only rehabilitation hospital in New England continually ranked since 1995 by *U.S. News and World Report* in its Best Hospitals survey. For more information, please visit www.spauldingrehab.org.

The Institute of Lifestyle Medicine is a non-profit educational organization committed to reducing lifestyle-related disease and mortality through physician-directed intervention.
www.instituteoflifestylemedicine.org

- END -