



For Immediate Release:

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Healthcare Professionals From Across the Globe Expected to Attend *Let's Go!*'s 3rd Annual 5-2-1-0 National Childhood Obesity Conference in Portland

Acclaimed obesity experts Dr. Robert Lustig and Dr. David Ludwig to Provide Keynotes on Sept 18-19th, Marking National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

PORTLAND, Maine - September 2, 2014 – More than 150 healthcare and public health professionals from across the globe are expected to attend *Let's Go!*'s 3rd annual 5-2-1-0 National Childhood Obesity Conference in Portland on September 18th and 19th, marking National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. Nationally recognized childhood obesity experts, including Robert Lustig, MD, who is featured in Katie Couric's 2014 documentary *Fed Up*, and David Ludwig, MD, PhD., will provide keynote addresses. Conference partners include Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, Maine Health, The Barbara Bush Children Hospital, and American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine chapter. Nationally, nearly one third of children and teens are overweight and 17% of that age group is obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES). However, new data indicates that childhood obesity rates are showing signs of leveling off.

"Let's Go!'s recent Obesity Prevalence study found that obesity levels among 3-18 year olds in the Greater Portland area have stabilized, statistics that are very encouraging in the fight against childhood obesity here in Maine," said Dr. Victoria Rogers, Director of Let's Go! "Our focus continues to be on changing behaviors, an approach that has proven effective. This conference brings together experts in the field of childhood obesity prevention who will share what they have learned and discuss how together we can work toward creating healthy families across the U.S."

The conference will cover such topics as metabolic syndrome, examining recent research, impact of health care reform, overeating vs. obesity, increasing healthy food and beverage options at schools and hospitals, and more. Local childhood obesity prevention doctors and specialists will also host workshops and discussions. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn from and network with other change leaders, and walk away with tools and techniques they can implement in their own communities.

“For the past eight years, Harvard Pilgrim Foundation has targeted its grant making on programs that fight childhood obesity by focusing on changing behaviors in environments where kids live, play and learn,” said Karen Voci, President of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation and a conference partner. Since 2008, Harvard Pilgrim Foundation has provided nearly \$2 million in grants to *Let’s Go!* Healthcare, of which \$1.5 million was provided to exclusively support the expansion of *Let’s Go!* Healthcare throughout Maine and into Massachusetts and New Hampshire. “Raising awareness of obesity prevention measures and ways for healthcare professionals to support families in adopting healthy habits is critical to improving the health of our communities.”

Additional guest speakers include Sandra Hassink, MD, FAAP, incoming president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and Reginald Washington, MD, FAAP, FACC, FAHA, Chief Medical Officer at the Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children in Denver, CO.

Added Dr. Rogers, “Our goal is to unite passionate medical and public health professionals to discuss next steps in the fight against childhood obesity. At this conference, we discuss what’s working, what’s not working, and where we go from here.”

The conference will be held at MaineHealth. For more information and to register visit <http://www.letsgo.org/>

About *Let’s Go!*

Let’s Go! is a nationally recognized childhood obesity prevention program that reaches children and families where they live, learn, work and play. *Let’s Go!* is committed to changing environments and policies at child care sites, schools, out-of-school organizations , healthcare practices, workplaces and communities.

The Let’s Go! daily message is 5-2-1-0:

- 5 or more fruits or vegetables
- 2 hours or less recreational screen time
- 1 hour or more of physical activity
- 0 sugary drinks, more water, and low-fat milk

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