

## Rise to the Challenge: Fight Fat and Flab

On March 20, the first day of spring, Super Bowl Champion Eli Manning and Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson, M.D., M.P.H., announced the launch of the National President's Challenge to encourage Americans to lead healthier lives.

The Challenge was a six-week event issued by the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, of which I am a proud member, to get Americans moving 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

The idea here is that once we start to be active, we will experience its enjoyment and satisfaction and continue to be active after the six weeks.

Americans shouldn't shrug off this simple commitment to physical activity. Studies indicate we are in a health crisis as a nation and are among the unhealthiest of all modern nations in the world.

Ponder this. Over two-thirds of Americans are obese or overweight. This is the direct result of a too sedentary lifestyle and eating refined foods that are high in sugar and fat. This is causing a high percentage of common diseases that are the nation's biggest killers including diabetes, heart disease, heart attacks, strokes, and cancer.

That is the bad news. The good news is that we can reduce our health risks by exercising regularly and vigorously, and eating more fruits, vegetables, lean cuts of meat, poultry and fish and whole grains. To do this, each of us must make a personal commitment to it. It cannot be solved by a government program. We have to do it ourselves – think Personal Responsibility!

To drive home the message of how simple it is to address our personal and nationwide health crisis, a group of Wounded Warriors, several hundred employees from AIG, and I participated in a fitness walk in downtown New York City March 20. We used the lunch hour to show that everyone could walk 30 minutes during their break, even in New York City, and become fit again.

There is NO excuse to not do this. If our Wounded Warriors who have lost limbs can do it, then the majority of Americans can do it!

While the official six-week National President's Challenge concluded May 15, it's not too late to challenge yourself to six weeks of activity. You'll feel the difference!

For more information, visit [www.presidentschallenge.com](http://www.presidentschallenge.com).

Sincerely,



Kirk Bauer, J.D.  
Executive Director



Kirk M. Bauer  
Executive Director  
DS/USA

Photo by Eric Chen  
by Eric Chen, courtesy of College Park Industries



2008 Bataan Memorial Death March - Pictured are 1st Lt. Ivan Castro with DS/USA Executive Director Kirk Bauer and Guardsman Kevin Pannell. After losing his sight from a mortar attack in Iraq in 2006, Castro completed one of the most grueling marathons in the world in around five hours. Bauer and Pannell marched for 14 hours.