



NEWS RELEASE

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2009 Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival Becomes Largest Health Event in Texas: Department of Health and Human Services Moves Festival Indoors to the Cool George R. Brown

May 22, 2009, Houston, TX—Houston’s Department of Health and Human Services joins the 3rd Annual Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival (HJMHF) on June 13th to promote its MAN UP Initiative. The Festival moves indoors to the George R. Brown Convention Center, Hall A. With more than 180,000 square feet of air-conditioned exhibit space, this year’s Festival becomes the largest health event in Texas. The 2009 MAN UP Festival grew out of National Men’s Health Week. Both events seek to promote the healthy lifestyles necessary to reduce the maladies that plague Houston’s multicultural community and to drive awareness to the health needs of our men and boys.

What exactly is the Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival?

The Houston Juneteenth Multicultural Health Festival (HJMHF) is a dynamic, family friendly, one-day festival that features 200+ exhibitors, showcasing the finest in healthcare products and services. This year’s festival focuses on recession induced stress and cutting-edge discoveries in natural health that may combat its damaging health effects. “Wake Up, Check Up, MAN UP!” is the motto for the coinciding Male Health and Wellness Expo. HJMHF’s presenting sponsor is the UnitedHealth Group; additional sponsors include H-E-B, Macy’s, Nielsen, Walgreen’s, Wells Fargo, Randall’s, “*Real Men Cook*,” Bounty, Fox 26/My20, KTRK ABC 13, KCOH AM, Minority Print Media, *Houston Chronicle*, *Rollin’ Out*, *The Greensheet*, *d-mars.com*, Radio Disney, METRO, and *RUMBO*.

Houston is ranked nationally as one of the “*Fattest Cities in America*,” by *Men’s Fitness magazine*. Supported by Houston Mayor Bill White and the Houston Wellness Association (HWA), The Festival echoes their goals of eliminating Houston’s poor fitness ranking by uniting multicultural communities, local men, and boys from the entire city to raise awareness to the importance of living active and healthy lifestyles.

The event will offer a wide array of FREE health services to Houston’s to men, women, and children who reside in the City’s multicultural communities-- many are uninsured or underinsured. The Harris County Hospital District and the city’s Department of Health and Human Services will organize health screenings, child vaccinations, and HIV/AIDS testing during The Festival. This one of a kind event anticipates the participation of over 20,000 visitors and boasts entertainment such as the “*Real Men Cook*” Competition, “*Stanky Legg*” Competition, and a Disney Kids’ Zone.

“The entire weekend provides a comfortable and entertaining environment to learn how to sustain a healthy lifestyle while bringing families closer together,” said Francis Page, Jr., Chairman of the African American Wellness Committee for the Houston Wellness Association. “This is a great event because it brings to the forefront the rising costs of health care, the increasing number of uninsured citizens and growing health concerns within minority communities. We hope this event begins to reverse the alarming trend.”

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More about MAN UP Expo 2009...

In its second year, and this year in conjunction with HJMHF, MAN UP 2009 is hosted by a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services, CBS Radio/Sports Radio 610, and Men's Health Network. This wellness initiative arose from the observance of National Men's Health Week and now seeks to focus attention on the health needs of Houston's men and boys. Ultimately, the initiative hopes to empower this group to achieve and maintain healthy habits.

More about Juneteenth...

Juneteenth—observed on June 19th is an official holiday in Texas. It recognizes June 19, 1865; the day when Union General Gordon Granger issued General Order #3 in Galveston, Texas setting free all remaining African American slaves in Texas. In 1979, State Representative Al Edwards pushed fervently to make June 19th an official state holiday. Since then, many celebrations have sprung up to rejoice in the emancipation of slaves in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas. For more information including a complete event schedule, list of confirmed sponsors, and media downloads, log on to www.houstonhealthfestival.org.

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