



**FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY TAKES OFF! 16 MAYORS AND MORE THAN 80 CITIES TAKE STEPS TOWARD WELLNESS**  
*6,000 people join first annual Walk Off and commit to a healthier lifestyle*

**NEW YORK, NY (September 21, 2009)** – The tallies are in and it’s official: Americans are taking the Challenge to fight obesity! In an exceptional demonstration of grassroots activism, Dr. Ian Smith and the 50 Million Pound Challenge united thousands of Americans across the country to take control of their health and turn the tide once and for all on the country’s number one health problem.

On September 12, 16 city governments and 6,000 people in more than 80 cities across the country took to the streets, parks and malls as part of Dr. Ian Smith’s first annual 50 Million Pound Challenge Walk Off. Participants logged 12,000 miles and burned an estimated 1.2 million calories, taking proactive steps toward community-supported wellness. The Walk Off couldn’t have come at a better time. Health care is at the top of President Obama’s agenda and, according to a recent report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, obesity-related costs account for \$147 billion in annual health care expenditures.

“This is a watershed event in the fight against obesity,” said Dr. Ian Smith, who walked in Richmond, VA, with Mayor Dwight Jones on Saturday. “Right in the middle of the health care reform debate and news that obesity-related costs are crippling budgets locally and nationally, communities came together in support of wellness. We put down the junk food and tasted success. Now America’s charge is to capitalize on the momentum and grow the Challenge larger still.”

Dr. Ian Smith, founder and creator of The 50 Million Pound Challenge and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The 4 Day Diet* intends to keep the momentum going, empowering fellow citizens to make wellness a personal and local priority. Individuals and teams can join the fight at [50MillionPounds.com](http://50MillionPounds.com). The 50 Million Pound Challenge is free thanks to State Farm®, whose agents helped organize the walks.

Saturday marked the first annual Challenge Walk Off, the unique community-based initiative anchored at [50millionpounds.com](http://50millionpounds.com), which provides free weight-loss resources including a 30-day diet plan, online journal, personal weight and activity trackers, and the support system needed for long-term success. Collectively, more than 1.4 million Challengers have already lost more than 4.8 million pounds.

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### **About The 50 Million Pound Challenge**

Dr. Ian Smith's *50 Million Pound Challenge* is a call-to-action for all Americans to come together and help people take control of their health by getting fit, losing excess weight and turning back the deadly toll of weight-related diseases that threaten nearly half of us. *The Challenge*, a campaign supported and endorsed by leaders across the community and national civic and health organizations, is sponsored by State Farm®.

### **About Dr. Ian Smith**

Dr. Ian is a diet expert on *VH1's Celebrity Fit Club* and author of the *NY Times* #1 best-sellers *4 Day Diet*, *Fat Smash Diet* and *Extreme Fat Smash Diet*, and other works of fiction and non-fiction. He hosts his own TV and radio shows, *BET's Meet the Faith* and *HealthWatch* on *American Urban Radio Network*. Dr. Ian is a contributor to *The View* and *Men's Health Magazine*. He has filed reports and written for *NBC Nightly News*, *Today Show*, *Essence*, *Ebony*, *People*, *Cosmopolitan* and University of Chicago's *Medicine on the Midway*. He lives with his family in Chicago.

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