

---

## Press Release

### TO ALL ASSIGNMENT EDITORS/HEALTH EDITORS

#### Get Active Toronto 2011 Report on Physical Activity

#### **93% of Toronto Youth are not meeting the recommended daily requirements needed to derive health benefits from physical activity**

TORONTO May 25, 2011 – Get Active Toronto today released its 2011 Report on Physical Activity in Toronto that revealed continued lower rates of physical activity among school age children particularly low for young girls. While at the same time, Toronto is experiencing the highest participation in interschool athletics in the last five years.

According to Medhat Mahdy, Chair, Get Active Toronto this year's report shows some improvements but still much more work to be done.

“We are encouraged that there is an increase in sports participation at schools in Toronto, the highest in the past five years...but at the same time still overall low rates of physical activity among children and young adults age 6-19,” said Mahdy.

“We need to encourage behavioural changes that increase fitness levels, in fact, the research indicates that something as simple as walking to school is a positive indicator towards children achieving the recommended levels of physical activity,” he added.

Get Active Toronto (GAT) wants to build partnerships and collaborations with organizations across all sectors to work through barriers to physical activity and improve the social determinants that will make Toronto a healthier more active city by 2020. One step towards this goal is through GAT's partnership with Playing for Keeps. The goals of Playing for Keeps initiative aligns with Get Active Toronto's and together we will create a legacy of healthier, more active and stronger communities and a deepened sense of belonging by leveraging the 2012 Ontario Summer Games and the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games.

#### **2011 Get Active Report Highlights**

***Lower rates of physical activity among young girls*** - The Get Active Toronto 2011 report revealed that only 4% of girls aged 6-19 compared to 9% of boys accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate and physical activity at least six days a week. In addition, participation in sports by young women is significantly less than males.

***Schools report that resources, space and time in the school day are still lacking to ensure the required level of student physical activity*** - Currently only 14% of children and youth meet

appropriate physical education levels. 37% of schools report that they lack adequate space; 38% of schools say they need more time in the school day; 77% need more resources.

***Increase in interschool athletic participation over the past five years*** – at the secondary level the number of teams has gradually increased over time and the latest results show the highest level both in terms of the number of team and the number of student participants. It was also reported that boys participate in secondary athletics in greater numbers than girls, 60% to 40%. Fewer than 10% of the secondary level sports teams are classified as co-ed.

***Walking to School increases overall physical activity in children*** - Toronto children who walk to school were twice as likely to achieve recommended levels of physical activity in comparison to children who were driven to school. However, of children living 1-2 km. from their school - only 28% walk to school and 32% walk home.

Get Active Toronto Recommendations:

- Individual, organizational and civic efforts to improve the social determinants of health in Toronto – generating a more physically active Toronto as a by-product
- Create physical activity programs that engage the whole family to be more active and make them accessible
- Create programs specifically for young girls and newcomer groups to increase access to physical activity make them accessible
- Implement wellness programs and incentives in your workplace
- Create opportunities to be physically active on the way to work/school/home and at work/school/home
- Walk, run, play – make physical activity FUN

For the full Get Active Toronto 2011 Report on Physical Activity, please go to [www.getactivetoronto.com](http://www.getactivetoronto.com)

## **PRESS CONFERENCE DETAILS**

**Hosted by:** Medhat Mahdy, Chair, Get Active Toronto and President and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Toronto

**Speakers:**

- Rahul Bhardwaj, President & CEO, Toronto Community Foundation
- Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Grant Review Team

**Photo ops:**

- Photo ops within Metro-Central YMCA.

**What:**

- Launch of 2011 Get Active Toronto Report on Physical Activity
- Introduction to **Playing for Keeps Where:** Metro-Central YMCA, 20 Grosvenor Street, Toronto – Eco Rooftop Garden

**When:** Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 10:30 a.m. (Press kits available through, [www.getactivetoronto.com](http://www.getactivetoronto.com))

For more information, please contact:  
Catriona Delaney  
Manager, Get Active Toronto  
647-267-9040.  
[catriona.delaney@ymcagta.org](mailto:catriona.delaney@ymcagta.org)

The **Playing for Keeps** workshop will be on Monday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011 at Hart House from 9-3pm. Registration at [www.playingforkeeps.ca](http://www.playingforkeeps.ca).

**GET ACTIVE TORONTO GOVERNING CHAIR:**  
Medhat Mahdy, President & CEO, YMCA of Greater Toronto

**STRATEGIC CABINET MEMBERS:**

Tom Anselmi, Executive Vice President and COO, Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment  
Rahul Bhardwaj, President & CEO, Toronto Community Foundation  
Dr. David McKeown, Medical Officer of Health, City of Toronto, Department of Public Health

