



News for Immediate Release

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Health Secretary Joins Students in York for International Walk to School Day

York – Secretary of Health Michael Wolf today walked with students and community members in an International Walk to School Day event at Lincoln Charter School.

The event highlighted the school's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, raising awareness for the need to ensure students have access to safer routes for walking and bicycling in the community, and emphasizing the importance of increasing physical activity among children and members of the community.

"The Corbett Administration believes all children deserve a healthy start in life. In order to make this possible, we must all work together to ensure they have the resources and tools available to do so," said Wolf. "By providing children with a safe way to walk or bike to school, we are able to increase daily physical activity and make yet another stride in the battle against childhood obesity."

Approximately 750 students, parents, teachers and community leaders including Mayor C. Kim Bracey, state Rep. Kevin Schreiber (D-York), board members of Lincoln Charter School and Coco, the Hershey Bears Mascot, will participate in this event. Participants walked four blocks from Lincoln Charter School through the West End of York and were escorted by the York City Police Department.

The SRTS program, made possible through mini-grants from the Department of Health, is an effort between the department and Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center to provide schools with the resources needed to make Pennsylvania's youth healthier.

SRTS mini-grants were available to schools in Pennsylvania that include grades K-8 for programs such as:

- A walking school bus, which is a group of children walking to school with one or more adults;
- A block parenting program and a safe walking educational program; and
- A bike education program that consists of classroom curriculum, school assemblies, community education seminars and a bike rodeo.

"Physical activity of any kind is great for kids, but walking or biking to school is a wonderful opportunity for parents and kids to spend quality time together and

promote a healthier lifestyle for the whole family,” said Donna Kephart, executive director at Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center.

Lincoln Charter School was one of 11 schools in the state to receive a SRTS mini-grant. Lincoln Charter School will use their grant to coordinate a bike education program that consists of classroom curriculum, school assemblies, community education seminars, a Bike Train program, a Bike Safety Task Force and a Bike Rodeo.

“It takes an entire community working together – parents, schools, community leaders – to make changes that will help lead our children to adopt healthy behaviors. The work of Lincoln Charter School is an excellent example of the impacts we can do when we work together to encourage healthy habits,” added Wolf.

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend children between the ages of 6 and 17 get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Research indicates that less than 15 percent of students between the ages of 5 and 15 walk to or from school – compared to 48 percent of children that walked or bicycled to school in 1969.

During the event, Wolf highlighted Governor Corbett’s *Healthy Pennsylvania* plan, which aims to increase access to affordable, quality healthcare for all Pennsylvanians and specifically includes plans to make sure all kids are insured.

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