Health Promotion Clinical Director

Special Olympics Health
MADE POSSIBLE BY Golisano FOUNDATION

Special Olympics Health Promotion (preventative medicine) **promotes healthy living and healthy lifestyle choices and addresses nation-specific health issues** among Special Olympics athletes and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through Health Promotion, volunteers engage with athletes using interactive educational tools, displays, motivational literature, and demonstrations to raise awareness about improving general health and well-being and reducing the risk of preventable diseases. Athletes learn how small behavioral changes can enhance and maintain their health and sports performance.

Importance & Impact

Health Promotion screenings have found that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes in the U.S. face significant health concerns due to limited knowledge of preventative health practices including:

- **69%** are overweight or obese
- **39%** have high blood pressure
- **26%** have low bone density and increased risk for bone fracture

Purpose & Goals

The goal of Special Olympics Health Promotion is to improve the quality of life and long-term health of Special Olympics athletes and people with IDD. This is achieved by:

- Improving self-efficacy and self-advocacy. Reducing risky behaviors such as smoking and poor nutrition. Connecting athletes to preventative healthcare screening services.
- Increasing the investment of health promotion leaders in people with IDD.
- Encouraging healthy behaviors, such as eating fruits and vegetables, enhancing effective handwashing, and practicing sun safety.

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