

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ALLIANCE

 **MOVE WITH US**

The Importance of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in Promoting Physical Activity

The Physical Activity Alliance supports inclusive and equitable access to physical activity opportunities and spaces across all sectors of the National Physical Activity Plan, including healthcare, workplace, community, education, schools, parks and recreation, public health infrastructure, the military, and transportation. The Alliance demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging¹ in its work to harness all voices to inspire innovation, and collectively address the profound and persistent inequities in order to promote safe, inclusive, and convenient opportunities for everyone to be physically active.

A healthy population is essential for fostering economic prosperity; for developing a strong, productive, globally competitive workforce; and for ensuring all individuals can achieve their full potential. However, striking disparities in health exist across race, ethnicity, income, geography, and education due in large part to structural racism and other unjust policies that concentrate power among privileged groups while denying others the opportunity to survive and thrive.^{2,3} While engagement in physical activity is crucial to the health and wellbeing of all people, opportunities for physical activity are not equitably afforded to all. In fact, policies -- many of which are still in place today-- were developed to deprive individuals from marginalized* communities the resources necessary to live an active lifestyle.^{4,5,6,7}

Regardless of the inequitable treatment of marginalized individuals, patients and clients across the United States are advised by health care professionals and trainers to be physically active. The goal of all Americans should be to meet or exceed the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans of 150 minutes per week of moderate intensity for adults and 60 minutes per day for children.⁸ Physical activity is powerful medicine that can prevent and treat chronic diseases of the body and mind, yet too many of our citizens have no sidewalks, safe streets, or recreational spaces to traverse to be physically active and lack childcare, resources for equipment, or sufficient time off from work to engage in moderate to vigorous physical activity as advised by the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans.⁹

Low physical activity and fitness pose immediate and long-term threats to our nation's safety and security and may limit young people's opportunity to pursue a military career.¹⁰ Currently, 71 percent of Americans ages 17-24 fail to meet core eligibility requirements for entrance into the military, creating a serious recruiting deficit.¹¹ Among those who do meet basic requirements for service, musculoskeletal injuries associated with low fitness levels cost the Department of Defense hundreds of millions of dollars¹² and have been identified as the most significant medical impediment to military readiness.¹³ This becomes a more challenging problem to address when we unveil the inequities that disproportionately affect young people from historically under-resourced communities and where military service can be an important and viable career path.

To assure equitable access to regular inclusion of physical activity for all people of all abilities in the United States, the PAA supports and recommends policies that support:

- affordable, accessible, and adequate healthcare coverage;
- sufficient funding for sustained implementation of physical education and physical activity for all educational settings, including children in pre-school and grades K-12;
- community infrastructure conducive to safe, multi-modal mobility and connectivity;
- financial, physical and people resources to sustain a thriving community;
- adequate and safe housing;^{14,15,16}
- a focus on decreasing and eliminating health disparities.

*"Marginalized communities are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, educational, and/or cultural life."²

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