

## Colorado Medicaid Patients Offered Free Weight-Loss Program

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DENVER — Medicaid patients in Colorado can now sign up for a free weight-loss program operated by National Jewish Medical and Research Center. The unique program, known as FitLogix™, relies on customized personal coaching, Internet education and support, and wireless activity monitors and scales.

FitLogix™ builds on a successful prototype previously offered to residents of rural Colorado. Medicaid patients are the third group of patients to participate in the weight-management program. Members of Colorado Public Employees Retirement Association and employees of National Jewish who are Anthem Blue Cross members began signing up for the free program on January 2, 2008.

"We are thrilled that the State of Colorado has agreed to offer Medicaid patients a free tool to help them lose weight," said David Tinkelman, MD, Vice President of Health Initiatives at National Jewish. "We are confident that FitLogix™ will help Colorado Medicaid patients lose weight and gain health, while reducing healthcare costs for the State of Colorado."

National Jewish tested a prototype program, called GetFit Colorado, for residents of rural Colorado. It was free to participants and funded by a grant from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment with revenues from the Colorado tobacco tax. After completion of the six-month program, 90 percent of participants had lost weight, with an average loss of 11.75 pounds or 5.88 percent of their body weight. Numerous studies have indicated that health benefits begin when people lose 5 percent of their body weight.

FitLogix™ is an expanded version of GetFit Colorado, lasting a full year and including several extra elements. It has two versions; one for patients with Internet access and one for patients without Internet access.

Counselors help all participants create a customized weight-loss program, then coach them with 15 phone calls during the year. Participants follow a self-paced educational program, which helps them understand the links between diet, exercise, health and weight.

Patients also receive a scale and an activity monitor, which they clip onto their shoes. For those with Internet access, the monitors and the scale send radio signals to a small device plugged into their computers, which then document their daily activity and weight on a personalized Web page. Participants will know all day long how much activity they have done and how many calories have been burned that day. Participants can also list foods they have eaten into a food journal, and the Internet site will automatically count up the calories they have consumed. Patients without Internet access write down their weight, activity levels, and food consumption in a diary.

The program also has specialized information for participants with type II diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease, and is available in Spanish as well as English.

"We believe that the success we achieved with National Jewish's asthma program, combined with the preliminary positive experience in the GetFit Colorado program, will result in similar results for our Medicaid population," said Christy Hunter, Disease Management Coordinator for the Department of healthcare Policy & Financing. National Jewish previously operated a successful asthma disease management program for Colorado Medicaid patients.

Medicaid patients can call 1-888-280-2251 to enroll in the program.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the

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## Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

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