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PUBLIC INFORMATION

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LIGHTEN UP CHARLESTON!

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., committee Co-Chairmen Dr. Marcus Newberry and Dr. Patrick O'Neil and members of the community steering committee announced a challenge and new initiative for the Charleston community at the Charleston Maritime Center.

Mayor Riley said, "Over the past thirty years, America has experienced a dramatic rise in the incidence of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, including hypertension. Medical care sustains people suffering with these health problems but cannot cure them. As a result, medical care costs have accelerated but health status has deteriorated. Many of these health problems are due to lifestyle choices, primarily inadequate nutrition and physical inactivity. This situation takes a heavy toll on our children and senior population. "

He added, "Working with community steering committee members: Roper-St. Francis, MUSC, College of Charleston, The Citadel, Charleston County School District, Benefitfocus, and SC DHEC - Region 7, with Dr. Marcus Newberry serving as the Chair and Dr. Pat O'Neil as the Co-Chairs, we are announcing a wellness initiative called Lighten Up Charleston. The mission of Lighten Up Charleston is simple: to reduce obesity by promoting healthy eating and physical activity."

Co- Chair Dr. Marcus Newberry said, "Community health and wellness is the next frontier in medicine! And data has shown that success in weight loss depends on not just the individual but groups and the community. This project is my number #1 priority because of its importance to the future of our population. "

Co- Chair Dr. Patrick O'Neil said, "This is a wonderful opportunity to marshal the resources of the community to address the very serious health problem of obesity in a positive and supportive manner."

The role for Lighten Up Charleston is to be supportive of the programs already out there while creating a rallying cry and a goal for the community to commit itself to and gain a real sense of pride in the accomplishment.

The initiative will encourage greater participation in existing organizations and programs and also to advocate the creation of programs of their own by individuals and organizations.

Lighten Up Charleston will provide an interactive website, www.lightenupcharleston.org, for people to find programs in our community to help them get healthy, track their progress, and learn ways to lose weight. You can log in and report your weight loss, create a group, tell your story or seek help from the many partners in this huge effort to get healthy!

The goal of the first year is to lose 100,000 pounds and become recognized as the healthiest city in the southeastern US. Charleston joins a growing number of cities (New York City, Oklahoma City, Greenville, Savannah, Louisville and Chicago) taking steps to improve health status of their population by means of public health and promoting better lifestyle choices.

The following principles will serve as guidelines for weight loss for each person:

- **Fruits and Vegetables-** Eat 5 or more servings per day
- **Get Moving** - Increase the level of physical activity each day
- **Portion Control** - Manage portion sizes, bigger is not always better
- **Beverage Consumption** - Replace high-calorie beverages with healthy drinks
- **Keep Track** – monitor your weight, activity, and intake

FOR MORE INFO:

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