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New UNH Distance Learning Course to Address Youth Obesity

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Obesity is epidemic in America. The nation's youth now commonly suffers from diseases such as diabetes type 2 that were previously considered afflictions of old age.

“Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds,” a new, distance-learning course being offered for the first time this February by the University of New Hampshire and Plymouth State University, addresses the challenges posed by the epidemic. The course is designed primarily for public health care employees and K-12 employees, such as physical education teachers, health teachers, school food service employees, classroom teachers and school administrators.

From now until Feb. 6, 2004, students can register for “Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies” through UNH and PSU. New Hampshire's K-12 employees can be reimbursed by their school systems for the variable 2- to 4-credit course.

The distance-learning course comprises 12 hour and a half sessions. Students can take it at their own pace, viewing video stream sessions via a Web stream server.

“We recommend that students take the course as a team within their school district,” says Tamara Martin, UNH research associate professor of health management and policy. “We've found that teams can be very effective change agents within their schools.”

“Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies” is sponsored by a \$325,000 U.S. Department of Education Physical Education Program (PEP) Grant. If students take the course's lab, they will become trained to be certified to administer the American Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAPHERD) fitness test and eligible for a free laptop upon certification.

Any resulting revenue from the course will go to the New Hampshire Healthy Schools Coalition to support mini grants for implementation programs in schools and communities.

For more information about the course and to register, contact: Tamara Martin at tamartin@cisunix.unh.edu or call (603) 862-3653.