

# Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®



Special Olympics is the world's largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities. Many of our athletes come to us with neglected health problems. At State Games and other events, we offer a wide range of free health screenings and care. Our goal is to provide health education and wellness resources to everyone involved in Special Olympics - from athletes and their families to coaches and volunteers.

Healthy Athletes is a Special Olympics program that provides free health screenings in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the anxiety and fear people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a visit to the doctor or dentist.

Despite a mistaken belief that people with intellectual disabilities receive the same or better health care than others, they typically receive sub-standard care or virtually no health care at all. Health examinations have found that Special Olympics athletes are at increased risk of secondary health issues:

- 37% have obvious, untreated tooth decay
- 16% have an eye disease
- 23% have low bone density
- 26% fail hearing tests
- 48% have at least one kind of skin or nail condition

We not only serve these athletes but also train healthcare professionals who then go back to their practices with increased knowledge of and compassion for people with intellectual disabilities. Join the more than 90,000 health care providers and students worldwide who have volunteered with the Healthy Athletes program and changed the life of a person with intellectual disabilities. They came to help, but they discovered the experience helped them too, and in many cases, changed their lives.

## EXAMINATIONS ARE OFFERED IN 7 DIFFERENT HEALTH AREAS:

1. [Med-Fest\\*](#)
2. [Fit Feet\\*](#)
3. [FUN fitness\\*](#)
4. [Health Promotion\\*](#)
5. [Healthy Hearing](#)
6. [Special Smiles](#)
7. [Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes](#)

\* Indicates areas we need to fill with a clinical director in order to offer these disciplines.

## How to Get Involved

For more detailed information on the Healthy Athletes program or to pursue other ways to partner with Special Olympics Mississippi, contact Sara Shea, Unified Champion Schools Director and Healthy Athletes Coordinator at 601-856-7748 or through email at [Sara.Shea@SpecialOlympicsMS.org](mailto:Sara.Shea@SpecialOlympicsMS.org)

You can also visit our website at [specialolympicsms.org](http://specialolympicsms.org) or find us on Facebook or Twitter.

