



# Healthy Athletes

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® is a Special Olympics program that provides free health examinations in a fun, welcoming environment that removes the anxiety and trepidation people with intellectual disabilities often experience when faced with a visit to a medical professional. Our impact on the health and well-being of Special Olympics athletes around the world is great, in some cases saving lives by discovering unknown health issues or providing health care that otherwise would not be available. We not only serve these athletes but also (1) train health care professionals who return to their practices with increased knowledge and confidence about treating people with intellectual disabilities and (2) influence improvements in health care for people with intellectual disabilities at the policy and systemic level.

## EXAMINATIONS ARE OFFERED IN 8 DIFFERENT HEALTH AREAS:

**Med-Fest Fit Feet FUNfitness Health Promotion Healthy Hearing Special Smiles Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes Strong Minds**

## IMPORTANCE

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:

- 36%** have obvious, untreated tooth decay
- 16%** have an eye disease
- 29%** have low bone density
- 24%** fail hearing tests
- 49%** have at least one kind of skin or nail condition



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Largest global public health organization specifically for people with intellectual disabilities
- Provided more than 1.9 million screenings to Special Olympics athletes worldwide
- Trained more than 220,000 professionals targeting ID related health concerns
- Events in more than 135 countries
- Given away more than 150,000 pairs of eyeglasses free of charge
- Healthy Athletes Software (HAS) is the largest database of health data for people with intellectual disabilities in existence
- Contributed to establishment of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry and the signing of the Special Olympics Sports and Empowerment Act of 2004