Annual Health Report

2019 Health Initiatives

Special Olympics Washington

Special Olympics Health

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Made possible by Golisano

Kaiser Permanente, Official Health Partner of Special Olympics Washington
Dear Friends of Special Olympics Washington,

Eunice Kennedy Shriver once told me that her first priority and motivation for founding Special Olympics was to provide a better quality of life for people who have intellectual disabilities. She was reminding me to never lose sight of the mandate to keep their needs at the top of MY motivation when leading Special Olympics programs. The most impactful metrics when evaluating quality of life revolve around HEALTH. How good do you feel? How easily can you move around? Do you hurt?

Through the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program, we now have data on prevalence rates for such health concerns as chronic pain, disease, vision problems, hearing loss, and issues associated with aging among our Special Olympics Washington athletes; and how they compare to other Special Olympics athletes and the general public. You may wonder why Special Olympics has taken it upon ourselves to collect this data and to be so proactive in publishing it and working within our communities to address disparities. It is because our athletes deserve the best quality of life possible. We started with sports training and competition because we KNOW that it improves quality of life for ANYONE who participates. Now we are adding a focus on health because we know that health and wellness directly impact proficiency in sport and quality of life in general. We are doing it because it is the right thing to do for our athletes and their families.

Globally, more than 2 million free health screenings have been conducted in more than 130 countries through our Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program. To do our part in Washington, with support from Special Olympics International, the Golisano Foundation, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Kaiser Permanente of Washington, we have trained 33 Clinical Directors, medical professionals from 7 health disciplines who are specifically training in how to work with our athletes to get more accurate diagnoses and to make prescriptive referrals for follow-up care when needed. In the process, Special Olympics has become the largest global public health organization in the world dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.

This year’s health report for Special Olympics Washington, provides an overview of our health and wellness initiatives and how our athletes compare to other Special Olympics athletes and the general public on several chief indicators.

We invite you to join us in the work of providing better and more frequent screenings for the citizens of Washington with intellectual disabilities. If you know a medical professional who might join us in providing screenings; if you know a family who needs help with finding a medical professional to work with their family member with intellectual disabilities; if you know a Special Olympics athlete (or better yet, a FUTURE Special Olympics athlete!) who could benefit from a trip through our Healthy Athletes program, call us. If you or your corporation wants to be part of this work to meaningfully change lives and communities for the better, call us!

With hope for a healthy future for ALL,

Dave Lenox,
President & CEO
Special Olympics Washington
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## Global Population Comparison of Health Indicators

### Healthy Athletes screening results Special Olympics Washington 2007-2019 (data entered as of 06 Aug 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>SO Global</th>
<th>SO North America</th>
<th>SO United States</th>
<th>SO Washington</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mouth Pain*</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>39,777</td>
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<td>Untreated Tooth Decay*</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>98,981</td>
<td>25.2</td>
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<td>Missing Teeth*</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>76,181</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>38,162</td>
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<td>Gingival Signs*</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>123,633</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>60,405</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urgent Dental Referral*</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>37,561</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>11,749</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Hearing Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>133,623</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>63,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gait Abnormalities</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>65,925</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>32,959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bone Deformation</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>30,478</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>14,753</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skin/Nail Conditions</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>66,190</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>29,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Eyes Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>223,300</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>102,771</td>
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<td>Never Had an Eye Exam*</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>36,105</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3,316</td>
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<td>Eye Disease</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>35,531</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17,483</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needed new Rx</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>79,558</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>47,757</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Hearing Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>134,828</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>67,914</td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent Hearing Loss</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9,095</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>5,212</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blocked or Partially Blocked Ear Canal</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>53,118</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>27,799</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed PureTone Hearing Test</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>32,710</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>18,668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Possible Middle Ear Problems</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>37,820</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>20,326</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Promotion Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>175,784</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>66,580</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Bone Density (adults)*</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>8,314</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>5,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obese (child)*</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>12,592</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>4,964</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overweight (child)*</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>10,798</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>2,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>Underweight (child)*</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>7,532</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>881</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obese (adult)*</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>26,368</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>18,538</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overweight (adult)*</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>22,718</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>11,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underweight (adult)*</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4,035</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1,084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Tobacco Products*</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11,058</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>3,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Second Hand Smoke*</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>50,262</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>16,264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun Fitness Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>128,762</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility Problems Identified*</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>80,367</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>42,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength Problems Identified*</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>70,867</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>32,327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Problems Identified*</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>87,381</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>43,731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 or More Days Most Weeks</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>58,470</td>
<td>66.4</td>
<td>32,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than 3 Days Most Weeks</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>41,191</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>13,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Regular Exercise Program</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9,230</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2,430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = number with each health condition

*Percentages based on number of athletes who completed particular test or answered particular question

For more information, please send an email to healthdata@specialolympics.org
When comparing the prevalence rates of a number of health indicators in Special Olympics athletes to those in the general population, disparities become evident. One of the largest discrepancies exists in obesity. In Special Olympics athletes, 31% of the adult population globally were obese compared to 13% of the general population. However, within the United States, a higher percentage of adult Special Olympics athletes were sufficiently active compared to the general population.

Table A. Comparative health indicators for Special Olympics athletes and the general population (2007-2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>General Population, United States (%)</th>
<th>Special Olympics Athletes, SOWA (%)</th>
<th>Special Olympics Athletes, United States (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Untreated Tooth Decay</td>
<td>27.0²</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Teeth²</td>
<td>52.0¹</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obesity (BMI≥30) (20+)</td>
<td>30.4⁴</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient Aerobic activity (3 or more days per week)</td>
<td>49.7⁶</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient Aerobic activity (1-2 days per week)</td>
<td>19.9⁷</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive - Aerobic activity (No days per week)</td>
<td>30.4⁸</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance Problems</td>
<td>35.4⁹</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>76.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skin/Nail Conditions</td>
<td>27.0¹⁰</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43.5% of athletes needed a new prescription

25.5% of athletes have skin and nail conditions

57.1% of athletes are overweight or obese

53.1% of athletes have flexibility problems

27.2% of athletes have blocked or partially blocked ear canals

33.5% of athletes have gingival signs

324 Strong Minds screenings were conducted in 2019

1,805 Healthy Athletes screenings conducted in 2019.
At Health Promotion, physicians, nurses, nutritionists and health educators provide clinical screenings in bone density, blood pressure and BMI, and provide education in areas such as nutrition, sun safety, and tobacco cessation. Health Promotion targets athletes' needs and is designed to convey and reinforce key concepts on healthy living, healthy lifestyle choices, and locally-specific health issues.

**Goals**

1. Encourage and enhance healthy behaviors, and reduce risky behaviors, related to chronic disease prevention, as well as locally-specific health issues; improve self-efficacy and self-advocacy of people with intellectual disabilities around health and wellness.
2. Provide training and educational opportunities through screening events for allied health providers to learn how to provide quality care and wellness programming to individual with intellectual disabilities.
3. Develop a library of knowledge about the overall health and wellness of children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

**What is SOWA doing about it?**

1. Improving meals at competitions through implementation of *Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines*.
2. Implementing 8-week wellness programs such as *Fit 5* to increase physical activity, promote better nutrition and improve hydration.
3. Training athletes to be fitness leaders on their Special Olympics teams.

**Screening Results**

- **30.0%** of adults are overweight
- **27.1%** of adults are obese
- **13.0%** of adults have low bone density
- **20.0%** of children are overweight
- **45.0%** of children are obese
- **27.1%** of adults have high blood pressure
- **4.1%** use tobacco products
Healthy Hearing is designed to assess and report the prevalence of hearing loss among Special Olympics athletes as a means of focusing attention on the hearing needs of people with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, Healthy Hearing identifies athletes with hearing loss and ear health problems through hearing testing; notifies and counsels them about needed follow-up care; and whenever possible, provides follow-up care on site at Special Olympics events.

Goals
1. Increase access to ear and hearing care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Raise hearing health professionals’ awareness of the ear and hearing concerns of people with special needs, including difficulties involved in accessing care.
3. When possible, provide a list of regional hearing health professionals who care for people with special needs to all athletes who participate in Healthy Hearing.
4. Develop a body of knowledge about the ear canal hygiene of children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
5. Train healthcare professionals, students and others about the needs and care management of people with intellectual disabilities.

Screening Results

- **27.2%** have a blocked or partially blocked ear canal
- **28.6%** failed a PureTone hearing test
- **27.7%** received a referral to seek further care
Special Olympics developed the Fit Feet discipline to evaluate foot and ankle deformities. Athletes receive foot and ankle screenings, are checked for proper shoes and socks, and receive education in proper footwear and care of the feet and toes.

### Goals

1. Increase access to foot care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Raise foot care specialists' awareness of foot concerns of people with special needs, including difficulties involved in accessing treatment.
3. Provide a list of regional foot care specialists who care for people with special needs to all athletes who participate in the Special Olympics Fit Feet program.
4. Develop resources for parents and coaches about proper foot care of children and adults with special needs.
5. Insure appropriate footwear with regards to the sport in which an athlete is participating as well as fit and comfort.
6. Train healthcare professionals, students, and others about the needs and care management of people with intellectual disabilities.

### Screening Results

- **55.1%** have gait abnormalities
- **25.5%** have skin or nail conditions
- **13.5%** have bone deformation
- **13.5%** received a referral to seek further care

Screenings led by 2 Clinical Directors: 
Vinai Prakash, DPM  
Jeffrey Pentek, DPM

**222** athlete screenings in 2019

What is SOWA doing about it?

1. Developing a referral network of foot care providers to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Seeking opportunities to provide new athletic footwear and socks to athletes at competitions.

Special Olympics developed the Fit Feet discipline to evaluate foot and ankle deformities. Athletes receive foot and ankle screenings, are checked for proper shoes and socks, and receive education in proper footwear and care of the feet and toes.
FUNfitness provides fitness screenings and education services. Developed in collaboration with the American Physical Therapy Association, FUNfitness provides an assessment of:

- flexibility of hamstring, calf, shoulder rotator and hip flexor muscles;
- strength of the abdominal, lower and upper extremity muscles;
- static and dynamic balance;
- and aerobic fitness.

**Goals**

1. Improve athletes’ ability to train and compete in Special Olympics and improve the overall fitness of people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Train healthcare professionals, students and others about the needs and care management of people with intellectual disabilities.
3. Collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health and fitness status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities.
4. Advocate for improved health and wellness policies and programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

**What is SOWA doing about it?**

1. Developing a referral network of physical therapy providers to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Training coaches on proper warm up and cool down techniques.
3. Partnering with gyms to provide accessible and inclusive programming for athletes.

**Screening Results**

- **53.1%** have flexibility problems
- **41.1%** exercise 3 or more days most weeks
- **16.6%** received a referral to seek further care
- **53.7%** have balance problems
- **41.7%** exercise less than 3 days most weeks
- **46.3%** have strength problems
- **2.9%** have no regular exercise routine

175 athlete screenings in 2019

Screenings led by 4 Clinical Directors:

- Natasja Ysambart, DPT
- Pam Rock, PT
- Matt Harnpadoungsataya, PT, DPT
- Laura Johnstone, MPT
Goals

1. Increase access to eye care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Raise eye care professionals’ awareness of vision and eye health concerns of people with special needs, including difficulties involved in accessing treatment.
3. Train healthcare professionals, students and others about the needs and care management of people with intellectual disabilities.
4. Develop a body of knowledge about vision and eye health of children and adults with special needs.

What is SOWA doing about it?

1. Developing a referral network of eye care providers to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Partnering with Lions Club members statewide to serve as volunteers.

Through the global partnership of Special Olympics and Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes, Special Olympics athletes receive extensive vision and eye health tests, refraction for those requiring further exam, prescription eyeglasses, protective sports eyewear (either with a prescription or simply protective), and evaluation for referral for follow-up care through Opening Eyes.

Screening Results

- 9.9% received a referral to seek further care
- 43.5% needed a new prescription
- 10.0% have an eye issue

232 athlete screenings in 2019

Screenings led by 2 Clinical Directors:
Katie Hash, OD
Michelle Carle, MD
Special Smiles provides Special Olympics athletes with oral health screenings; education about the importance of good oral hygiene habits; instructions in correct tooth brushing and flossing methods; and refers athletes to potential sources of treatment and follow-up care.

**Goals**
1. Increase access to dental care for Special Olympics athletes, as well as all people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Raise dental professionals’ awareness of the oral health concerns of people with special needs, including difficulties involved in accessing care.
3. Train healthcare professionals, students and others about the needs and care management of people with intellectual disabilities.
4. Develop a body of knowledge about the oral healthcare needs of children and adults with intellectual disabilities.
5. Provide a list of regional dental professionals who care for people with special needs to all athletes who participate in Special Smiles.

**Screening Results**

- **14.4%** have mouth pain
- **33.5%** have gingival signs
- **19.1%** have untreated tooth decay
- **7.2%** received an urgent dental referral
- **35.8%** have missing teeth
- **30.4%** received a referral to seek further care

**What is SOWA doing about it?**
1. Developing a state-wide referral network of dental providers to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Providing protective mouthwear to athletes participating in impact sports.
3. Partnering with local universities to train dental students on inclusive health practices.

**Screenings led by 6 Clinical Directors:**
- Jessica Webb, DDS
- Travis Nelson, DDS, MSD, MPH
- Donna Quinby, DMD, MSD
- Aarika Anderson-Elter, DMD
- Ashland Doomes, DMD
- Kim Espinoza, DDS, MPH
Special Olympics

**Strong Minds**

324 athlete screenings in 2019

Screenings led by 3 Clinical Directors:
Megan Gary, MD
Kara Rice, LICSW
David O’Neal, M.S., LMHC

What is SOWA doing about it?
1. Developing a referral network of mental health providers and counseling services to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Distributing *Tips for Stress* guides for coaches to use with athletes before, during and after competitions and practices.

Goals
1. Increase athlete awareness of active coping strategies that can be used in competition and in life.
2. Help athletes identify ways to manage stress during competition and in daily life.
3. Provide resources on good coping for athletes, coaches & caregivers.
4. Start conversations about stress, coping and emotional wellness.
5. Provide training and experiences for health students and professionals to discuss emotional well-being with individuals with Intellectual Disabilities.

Strong Minds is an interactive learning activity focused on developing adaptive coping skills. Competition provides a natural opportunity to develop active strategies for maintaining emotional wellness under stress, such as: positive thinking, releasing stress and connecting with others. Athletes learn about and try different active coping strategies as they move through stations. Before exiting, athletes identify the strategies they like best and volunteers provide them with visual reminders to use these tools in competition and in daily life.

National Screening Results

- **12.0%** have no coping strategies
- **62.0%** use avoidant coping strategies
- **21.4%** use active coping strategies
Fit 5
Fit 5 is implemented weekly at team practice. Athletes have three simple goals: drink 5 bottles of water a day, eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and exercise 5 times a week.

SOfit
SOfit is implemented weekly at school or in a club. The program focuses on four kinds of wellness: nutritional, physical, emotional and social. Each session of SOfit includes educational activities and physical activity.

TeamBuildr
TeamBuildr is designed for individual athletes that are looking for sport specific training plans to build strength, endurance, and speed.

Athletes and partners participating in 8 weeks of fitness and nutrition programming

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Clinical and wellness professionals trained on providing care and education to people with intellectual disabilities through volunteering.

Special Olympics Washington coaches received sports-specific training including modules in health, fitness and nutrition.

Special Olympics Washington coaches and athlete leaders attended health and concussion literacy courses at annual leadership conference.

Athletes and partners learned how to improve fitness and athletic performance through Performance Stations.
Healthy Athletes Screenings in 2020

FEBRUARY 8
Lynnwood

FEBRUARY 9
Lynnwood

FEBRUARY 29
Wenatchee

JULY 25
Olympia

AUGUST 22
Everett

OCTOBER 17 & 18
Columbia River

NOVEMBER 21
Tri-Cities