



Special Olympics Washington

Annual Health Report

2019 Health Initiatives



Special Olympics
Health

MADE POSSIBLE BY
Golisano FOUNDATION



CENTERS FOR DISEASE
CONTROL AND PREVENTION



**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)

	SO Global		SO North America		SO United States		SO Washington	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
	100.0	289,741	100.0	138,475	100.0	130,804	100.0	1,406
Mouth Pain*	14.2	39,777	11.7	15,643	11.6	14,708	14.2	193
Untreated Tooth Decay*	36.3	98,981	25.2	32,649	25.1	30,800	22.2	284
Missing Teeth*	27.7	76,181	29.0	38,162	29.0	35,972	28.2	363
Gingival Signs*	45.3	123,633	46.1	60,405	45.6	56,406	43.7	561
Urgent Dental Referral*	13.8	37,561	9.0	11,749	8.9	11,016	7.8	100
Fit Feet Total	100.0	133,623	100.0	63,040	100.0	56,089	100.0	603
Gait Abnormalities	58.3	65,925	64.5	32,959	63.5	28,475	43.0	218
Bone Deformation	27.1	30,478	29.2	14,753	28.6	12,828	22.5	110
Skin/Nail Conditions	53.5	66,190	52.3	29,785	46.8	23,621	44.3	240
Opening Eyes Total	100.0	223,300	100.0	102,771	100.0	96,011	100.0	3,000
Never Had an Eye Exam*	22.0	36,105	3.6	3,316	3.8	2,766	3.1	82
Eye Disease	15.9	35,531	17.0	17,483	16.8	16,172	22.5	676
Needed new Rx	35.6	79,558	46.5	47,757	46.8	44,965	29.4	883
Healthy Hearing Total	100.0	134,828	100.0	67,914	100.0	64,839	100.0	581
Permanent Hearing Loss	6.7	9,095	7.7	5,212	7.7	4,999	6.4	37
Blocked or Partially Blocked Ear Canal	39.4	53,118	40.9	27,799	41.0	26,602	28.7	167
Failed PureTone Hearing Test	24.3	32,710	27.5	18,668	27.6	17,910	23.1	134
Possible Middle Ear Problems	28.1	37,820	29.9	20,326	30.0	19,453	20.0	116
Health Promotion Total	100.0	175,784	100.0	66,580	100.0	60,182	100.0	604
Low Bone Density (adults)*	27.2	8,314	26.4	5,041	26.4	4,650	27.3	86
Obese (child)*	17.2	12,592	31.8	4,964	32.8	4,592	35.7	30
Overweight (child)*	14.7	10,798	17.1	2,672	17.3	2,425	16.7	14
Underweight (child)*	10.3	7,532	5.7	881	5.4	750	0.0	0
Obese (adult)*	32.4	26,368	45.9	18,538	46.9	17,092	53.3	203
Overweight (adult)*	27.9	22,718	27.8	11,215	27.8	10,132	27.0	103
Underweight (adult)*	5.0	4,035	2.7	1,084	2.5	928	5.2	2
Use Tobacco Products*	7.5	11,058	6.2	3,235	5.9	2,788	6.6	25
Exposure to Second Hand Smoke*	37.4	50,262	35.4	16,264	35.4	14,912	42.5	149
Fun Fitness Total	100.0	128,762	100.0	58,215	100.0	54,090	100.0	358
Flexibility Problems Identified*	62.4	80,367	73.0	42,473	73.0	39,485	75.7	271
Strength Problems Identified*	55.0	70,867	55.4	32,237	56.2	30,403	48.9	175
Balance Problems Identified*	67.9	87,381	75.1	43,731	76.1	41,158	70.1	251
3 or More Days Most Weeks	53.7	58,470	66.4	32,007	66.2	29,701	71.6	209
Less Than 3 Days Most Weeks	37.8	41,191	28.6	13,813	28.6	12,851	26.7	78
No Regular Exercise Program	8.5	9,230	5.0	2,430	5.2	2,313	1.7	5

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

General Population Comparison of Health Indicators

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)

Health Indicator	General Population, United States (%)	Special Olympics Athletes, SOWA (%)	Special Olympics Athletes, United States (%)
Untreated Tooth Decay	27.0 ²	22.2	25.1
Missing Teeth ²	52.0 ³	28.2	29.0
Obesity (BMI≥30) (20+)	30.4 ⁵	53.3	46.9
Sufficient Aerobic activity (3 or more days per week)	49.7 ⁶	71.6	66.2
Insufficient Aerobic activity (1-2 days per week)	19.9 ⁷	26.7	28.6
Inactive - Aerobic activity (No days per week)	30.4 ⁸	1.7	5.2
Balance Problems	35.4 ⁹	70.1	76.1
Skin/Nail Conditions	27.0 ¹⁰	44.3	46.8

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¹2008-2018 time frame is for Special Olympics data and does not necessarily mean the general population data corresponds to the same time.

² Special Olympics athletes often have many missing teeth and it is possible the metrics for the general population may reflect more people with 1 or 2 missing teeth.

2019 Health Summary

Special Olympics Lions Clubs International **Opening Eyes®**



43.5% of athletes needed a new prescription

Special Olympics **Fit Feet**



25.5% of athletes have skin and nail conditions

Special Olympics **Health Promotion**



57.1% of athletes are overweight or obese

Special Olympics **FUNfitness**



53.1% of athletes have flexibility problems

Special Olympics **Healthy Hearing**



27.2% of athletes have blocked or partially blocked ear canals

Special Olympics **Special Smiles®**



33.5% of athletes have gingival signs

Special Olympics **Strong Minds**



324 Strong Minds screenings were conducted in 2019

1,805

Healthy Athletes screenings conducted in 2019.

Special Olympics Health Promotion



247 athlete screenings in 2019

Screenings led by 3 Clinical Directors:
Susanna Block, MD, MPH
Jenny Pang, MD
Julie Larsen, Ph.D., RDN, ACSM RCEP

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.

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.

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.

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

Special Olympics Healthy Hearing



217 athlete
screenings
in 2019

Screenings led by 3 Clinical Directors:
Susan Porter, AuD
Mihwa Kim, AuD
Leah Martin, AuD

What is SOWA doing about it?

1. Developing a referral network of ear care providers to serve athletes with follow up care needs.
2. Partnering with local universities to train audiology students on inclusive health practices.

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.

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.

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 Fit Feet



222 athlete screenings in 2019

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

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.

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.

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.

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

Special Olympics **FUNfitness**



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. 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.

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.

Screening Results

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

Special Olympics Lions Clubs International **Opening Eyes®**



232 athlete
screenings
in 2019

Screenings led by 2 Clinical Directors:
Katie Hash, OD
Michelle Carle, MD

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



388 athlete screenings in 2019

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

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.

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.

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.

Screening Results

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

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

Healthy Communities

172

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



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.



Health & Wellness Trainings

238

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

108

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

172

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

375

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

