

newsrelease**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2008****Contact: Sharon Torgerson
(617) 509-7458****Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation honors
Healthy Weight for Children State Champions**

The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation recognized three **Healthy Weight for Children State Champions** - exemplary leaders who have made a singular contribution to improving fitness and nutrition for children. The leaders were recognized at a Harvard Pilgrim Foundation conference for child health leaders and advocates as part of *Growing Up Healthy*, a five-year initiative to support healthy weight for children throughout Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

“Approximately 30% of American children ages 6-11 are overweight and 15% are obese. The physical, educational and economic costs of the rapidly escalating numbers of overweight children are staggering,” said Karen Voci, Executive Director of the Harvard Pilgrim Foundation. “But people across Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine are working tirelessly to correct this problem and we are proud to honor these champions and share their approaches to help stem the epidemic of childhood obesity.”

This year, the Harvard Pilgrim Foundation’s **Healthy Weight for Children State Champions** awardees are:

Dr. Michael Lambke accepted the award for the Maine Center for Public Health’s [MCPH] **Maine Youth Overweight Collaborative - Keep ME Healthy Program**. Dr. Lambke and other Maine health care providers in partnership with MCPH, the Maine Harvard Prevention Research Center, and the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics are implementing a national model for doctors to address weight issues with their younger patients with a goal of keeping kids at a healthy weight.

Peter Roby, Athletics Director, Northeastern University, Massachusetts. Peter Roby was one of the founders and first directors of Center for Sport in Society at Northeastern University and he pioneered the idea of college athletes doing community service in the form of physical activity in low-income communities.

Sandra Van Scoyoc, President, HNH foundation, New Hampshire. Sandra Van Scoyoc was instrumental in the creation of the Healthy Eating Active Living coalition in NH, a coalition that was founded to create and implement a statewide obesity prevention plan.

The Harvard Pilgrim Foundation has pledged \$5 million to combat childhood obesity through their *Growing Up Healthy* initiative. Created in 1980, the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation promotes health and prevents disease through community service, medical education and research. More information on the Harvard Pilgrim Foundation can be found at www.harvardpilgrim.org/foundation.