

NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
February 9, 2006**

**Contact: Lorrie Holmgren
612/362-3242
Scott Smith
612/362-3726**

OWATONNA ELEMENTARY KIDS TO LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION & FITNESS

Minneapolis –School children in Owatonna are about to learn they have the “Power to be Fit!” Allina Hospitals & Clinics, PreferredOne, and the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), are joining together to sponsor an in-school curriculum on fitness and nutrition, built around the educational play, “The Power of the Pyramid,” which will be presented in 325 Minnesota schools by the end of the 2007 school year.

The 30-minute play will be performed at St. Mary’s School, 730 S. Cedar, Owatonna on February 17, 2006 at 1:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. and reporters are welcome to attend.

The play is presented by The National Theatre for Children, which has 26 years of experience producing highly successful educational programs. This is the first time health care providers and schools have collaborated on a program to teach children and their families how to stay healthy.

"Allina is committed to improving the health of the communities we serve -- and that means looking out into the community to address public health concerns," said Dorothy Erdmann, president, Owatonna Hospital. "As a part of our Community Benefit Program, we are proud to sponsor an initiative to encourage awareness and conversation

-MORE-

about healthy eating and physical activity in schools, with families, and in the clinic setting."

"Teaching children and their families about the importance of eating healthy foods and being physically active every day will help them maintain a healthy weight and avoid diseases linked to obesity such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease," said David Luehr, M.D., president of the Minnesota Medical Association, which represents more than 10,000 physicians throughout the state.

Geared to elementary school children and their parents, the program makes it easy and fun to learn about nutrition and fitness. In school, children will see a live interactive performance of "The Power of the Pyramid." Its lessons will be reinforced by workbooks, take-home activities to complete with their family, and classroom posters. There are also guidebooks and curriculum aids for teachers. In Allina clinics and other clinics selected by PreferredOne, children will receive an educational CD-ROM game and a family guide.

"Nutrition education is key to reducing obesity and this initiative will get our children headed toward healthy behavior and improved health in a fun, attention-getting positive manner," said John Frederick, M.D., executive vice president and chief medical officer for PreferredOne. "Nationally health plans spend billions of dollars each year on the results of unhealthy behavior. PreferredOne is pleased to be able to support this initiative that will get our children headed toward better health."

Owatonna Area Kids to Learn About Nutrition and Fitness

For Immediate Release

Page 3

This innovative program combines the power of schools and physician clinics to reach children and their families.

In addition to the performance at St. Mary's Catholic School, the play is scheduled to be performed at other schools in Steele County and Twin Cities area locations. For information about other performances, contact Katie Griep at the National Theatre for Children, 612/341-0882, ext. 202.

To download photographs of the production to use in your publication, visit

www.nationaltheatre.com

Other Web sites:

Allina: www.allina.com/community,

PreferredOne: www.PreferredOne.com, and

Minnesota Medical Association: <http://www.mmaonline.net/obesity/>