



## Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®

The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® program is designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness and their ability to train and compete in Special Olympics, through the provision of free health screenings and referral where necessary.

### Objectives

- To improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes at event-based health screening clinics;
- To make referrals to local health practitioners where appropriate;
- To train health care professionals and students about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities;
- To collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities; and,
- To advocate improved health policies and programs for persons with intellectual disabilities.

### Disciplines:

Special Olympics Special Smiles®  
Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes®  
Special Olympics Healthy Hearing  
Special Olympics FUNfitness  
Special Olympics Health Promotion  
Special Olympics Fit Feet  
Special Olympics MedFest

Healthy Athletes screenings are conducted at Special Olympics Games at all levels – local, state, country, region, world. Programs are supported by cash donations, significant in-kind donations of health equipment, products and volunteer health professionals and students, major cash sponsorships from organizations such as Lions Clubs International, and local support from many health-related organizations and industries.

As a result of 'Train-the-Trainer' programs conducted at the last three Special Olympics World Games, Healthy Athletes has been able to expand rapidly. Some 400 new clinical directors across the Healthy Athletes disciplines have been trained. Additionally, hundreds more clinical directors have been qualified through regional Train-the-Trainer programs. Currently, some 350 screening events are conducted each year, attracting more than 7,500 volunteer health professionals who provide valuable health services and acquire new knowledge and hands on experience in treating people with intellectual disabilities.

Clinical screening protocols utilized in the Healthy Athletes program are developed by leading professionals in their disciplines. A number of professional standards organizations have helped to develop or validate clinical screening procedures used in the Healthy Athletes program, including, for example, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Optometric Association, American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine, and American Physical Therapy Association.