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MEDIA ADVISORY

Citywide diet: New Haven challenged to shed 375,000 pounds

New Haven, Conn. — The new year is here and New Haven is going on a diet. As part of an initiative to create a healthier Elm City for all residents, health professionals, city government, and Yale University are challenging New Haveners to collectively shed 375,000 pounds. That translates into just under three pounds for each of the city's estimated 130,741 residents.

The Get Healthy CT weight-loss challenge formally begins Friday, January 10, at 9 a.m. at The Cornell Scott-Hill Health Center at 400 Columbus Ave.

Mayor Toni Harp is expected to attend Friday's launch, along with Paul Cleary, dean of the Yale School of Public Health, Yale-New Haven Hospital president and chief operating officer Richard D'Aquila, and Michael Taylor, CEO of Hill Health.

The weight target coincides with New Haven's recent 375th anniversary. A weight-loss calculator on the Get Healthy CT [website \(www.GetHealthyCT.org\)](http://www.GetHealthyCT.org) will track progress and also offers tips, exercise programs and events to help people reach their individual goals. Contra-Tiempo, an urban Latin dance troupe, will help launch the challenge with a January 16 performance at 7:30 p.m. of *Full Still Hungry* at Fair Haven Middle School (a pre-performance discussion begins at 6:45 p.m.).

New Haven is marked by wide disparities in health. Large numbers of residents live in underserved neighborhoods where high rates of obesity, tobacco use and other factors contribute to a range of potentially preventable chronic diseases.

"Prevention is critical. Small lifestyle changes in diet and exercise can have a big impact on your health," said Jeannette Ickovics, professor of public health at Yale and director of the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE), a partner in the Get Healthy CT initiative.

Ickovics noted that shedding just 5 percent of body weight — 10 pounds for a person who weighs 200 pounds — can prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. "The Get Healthy CT coalition provides resources to improve health for individuals, families and our New Haven community," she said.

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