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## **THE BIZICALLYFIT 2012 HEALTH CHALLENGE PITS MINNESOTANS AGAINST ONE ANOTHER IN HEALTHY COMPETITION**

*Legislators, businesses, community groups and families throughout Minnesota  
begin free statewide health competition*

**EDEN PRAIRIE, MN** – Minnesota Vikings starting cornerback Asher Allen, former Biggest Loser contestant Sione Fa, State Senator Carla Nelson and Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce President Ruthe Batulis today kicked off the Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota's BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge at the Minnesota Vikings' Winter Park field house with businesses of all sizes, colleges and universities, K-12 educators, non-profits and other community leaders. These teams will earn points for healthy behaviors like exercise, pedometer steps and weight loss, competing with others throughout the state for online rankings, virtual trophies and bragging rights.

This free statewide competition is designed to encourage Minnesota's employers to help their employees adopt healthy lifestyles. It consists of three competition categories: exercise, pedometer steps and weight loss. Participants may compete in just one, two or in all three categories. Participants can track their progress on the web, by smartphone or by SMS text. The Challenge also features social networking tools and mini-challenges that allow participants to easily communicate with team members and rival teams to maintain momentum throughout the 12-week challenge. Every Challenge participant wins with a healthier lifestyle, but one lucky participant that regularly tracks his or her progress will win one free week at a Biggest Loser Resort weight loss camp.

The BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge is sponsored by the Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota, a group of Minnesota companies joined together to create fun, engaging and informative events and competitions to help Minnesotans get and stay healthy. Alliance members that make this challenge possible include Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota, Cargill, Medica, the Midwest Dairy Association and Target.

"Our members care about the health and well-being of their employees and people in the communities where they do business," says Tom Mason, president, Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota. "The BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge is a fun way for Minnesotans to stick with their New Year's resolutions with the support of their coworkers, friends and family one minute of exercise, one step or one pound of weight loss at a time."

This is the third Challenge offered by the Alliance for a Healthier Minnesota, and its second statewide wellness competition offered, free of charge, to all Minnesotans. The 2011 Biggest Loser Minnesota Challenge brought 22,000 Minnesotans together with friends, family and coworkers to lose 76,048 pounds, earn 27,749,925 nutrition points and exercise 383,807 hours — the time it would take to walk around the earth 46 times.

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The spirit of competition is a great motivator for many people, and can go a long way toward keeping participants motivated to complete a Challenge. To encourage that healthy competition in a manageable way, the competition is divided into 12 large divisions that will compete head to head in the statewide competition.

The divisions include one for employees of Alliance member companies and 11 other divisions open to all other Minnesotans: Chambers/Businesses, Colleges and Universities, Faith Communities, Families, K-12 Educators, MN Sports Teams, MN TV/Radio Teams, Non-Profit Organizations, State and Local Government, State Legislature and Unaffiliated Teams.

Each division is made up of dozens – or even hundreds – of smaller teams competing against one another within their division. Teams will range in size from 1 to 11, an optimal size for team members to easily motivate and encourage one another throughout the competition. A team must have at least five members tracking their progress in a competition category to be listed on a category's leaderboard.

Individual health has a significant impact on employer costs, and working to support health and wellness can make a positive difference. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 75 percent of employers' healthcare costs are related to employee lifestyle choices. That's why forward-thinking employers of all sizes are implementing plans to help employees embrace healthier lifestyles. The CDC also says companies that sponsor health and wellness program get a return on their investment of between \$3-\$6 for every dollar spent over a two to five-year period.

It's not too late; register for the BizicallyFIT 2012 Health Challenge at [www.2012HealthChallenge.com](http://www.2012HealthChallenge.com). Registration begins today and the competition runs February 13 through May 4, 2012. Anyone age 18 or older who lives or works in Minnesota can create or join a team with coworkers, friends or family to track healthy behaviors and compete for online rankings and bragging rights. For assistance with questions on how to participate in the Challenge, contact [BizicallyFIT@HealthierMN.com](mailto: BizicallyFIT@HealthierMN.com) or go to [www.healthiermn.com/2012HealthChallenge](http://www.healthiermn.com/2012HealthChallenge).

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