

FY11 Appropriations Request

Project Name: Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Program

Requesting Entity (Name and Address):

Special Olympics International

Address: 1133 19th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20036

Subcommittee: **Labor-HHS-Education**

Account: Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control

Requested Amount: \$8,500,000

Previous Funding:

Previous Funding for Special Olympics Health Athletes Program

\$3.8 million for FY 03, \$4.55 million for FY 2004, \$7.894 for FY 2005, \$5.8 million for FY 2006, \$5.8 million for FY 2007, N/A for FY 2008, N/A for FY 2009, \$5.5 million in FY 2010

Authorization: "Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act," Public Law 108-406 authorized funding – Special Olympics will pursue reauthorization of this legislation.

Project Description:

A global team of health-care volunteers, Healthy Athletes works to improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes; make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate; train health care professionals and students about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities; collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities; and advocate for improved health policies and programs for people with intellectual disabilities.

Healthy Athletes has a presence in more than 100 countries. Its influence is evident with more than 76,000 healthcare professionals trained, free health screenings provided to more than 700,000 athletes, and 50,000 free pairs of eyeglasses given to athletes. And it is just beginning – Healthy Athletes continues to grow each year with help from a global network of volunteers, in-kind donations and other financial support.

By listening to athletes at events and conducting research over many years, Special Olympics leaders became aware of the lack of quality health care for people with intellectual disabilities and found it unacceptable. SOI found that people with intellectual disabilities have a 40 percent greater risk for health problems, and that health care professionals are not trained in or experienced with caring for people with intellectual disabilities.

Called into action, Special Olympics began to explore ways to help using Special Olympics' unique global reach and access to people with intellectual disabilities. The result was the launch of the Healthy Athletes initiative in 1997. Today, Healthy Athletes provides health screenings free of charge at Special Olympics competitions. Offered in a welcoming, fun environment, these screenings educate athletes on healthy lifestyle choices and identify problems that may need additional follow-up.

Special Olympics has been the world leader in serving the needs of the nearly 200 million people with intellectual disabilities since Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the organization over 40 years ago. The program is constantly expanding to add new programs in new parts of the world, and its Board members, leaders, staff, and volunteers work to bring Special Olympics to as many communities as possible. The goal is to create a world where every person is celebrated and accepted through the platform of sport.

Funding will go to the following:

MedFest is a free health screening program.

The Opening Eyes program is a vision and eye health screening in partnership with the Lions Clubs International Foundation.

The Special Smiles Program offers free dental screening, oral health information.

Healthy Hearing program is a free hearing screening designed to ensure proper audiological care.