2016 Launch - Speaker bios

✦ John Dreyzehner ✦

John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM was honored to join Governor Bill Haslam’s cabinet Sept. 19, 2011, as the 13th commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health. He is a physician with more than 25 years of service in clinical and public health leadership at the federal, state and local levels. Dreyzehner began his medical service in 1989 as a United States Air Force flight surgeon, where he learned about the critical force multiplier effect of the public health mission, the Baldrige performance excellence framework and accumulated more than 300 hours in the F-15 Eagle and other aircraft as a member of USAF 94th Fighter Squadron and later, Chief of Aeromedical Assessment for Air Combat Command. Following several years in the private practice of occupational medicine he returned to public service in 2002 as the director of a multi-county health district in the Tri-cities region of central Appalachia before coming to Tennessee as Commissioner.

✦ Jack Groppel ✦

Dr. Jack Groppel is the co-founder of the Johnson & Johnson Human Performance Institute. He is an internationally recognized authority and pioneer in the science of human performance and Co-Chair of the newly formed Global Alliance for Health & Performance. Dr. Groppel currently serves on an academic appointment as Professor of Kinesiology & Community Health at the University of Illinois @ Urbana-Champaign, and served as an Adjunct Professor of Management at the J.L. Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University for several years. Dr. Groppel has addressed the issue of worksite wellness and performance at such policy events as the United Nations Side Event for Physical Activity and Non-Communicable Disease, a U.S. Congressional Briefing on Worksite Health Promotion, and represented the worksite wellness industry at the historic Surgeon General's Call to Action on Walking and Walkable Communities.

✦ Jean Knaack ✦

Jean Knaack is the Executive Director of the Road Runners Club of America where she has served in the role since 2005, bringing over fifteen years of nonprofit management experience to the position. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay with a Bachelor’s of Science in Human Nutrition. She earned a Master’s of Public Administration with a concentration in nonprofit management from George Mason University. She regularly counsels running club and event leaders around the country on various topics of importance to the running community. Through her work with the RRCA she is a fitness advocate promoting running as healthy exercise and a competitive sport on a national scale. She served on the coordinating committee that developed the first National Physical Activity Plan for the United States. She has experience managing the financial operations of organizations ranging in size from $100,000 to $10 million. Jean has extensive skills in organizational and financial development, board and member relations, and program planning and implementation. She is an avid runner and has completed several marathons and countless road races and triathlons.

✦ Russell R. Pate ✦

Russell R. Pate, is a Professor in the Department of Exercise Science in the Arnold School of Public Health at the University of South Carolina. He has held several administrative positions including Chair, Department of Exercise Science; Associate Dean for Research, Arnold School of Public Health; and Vice Provost for Health Sciences. Pate is an exercise physiologist with interests in physical activity and physical fitness in children and the health implications of physical activity. He has published more than 300 scholarly papers and has authored or edited eight books. His research has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Heart Association, and several private foundations and corporations. He coordinated the effort that led to the development of the recommendation on Physical Activity and Public Health of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine (1995). He currently serves as Chair of the National Physical Activity Plan Alliance.
Shellie Pfohl was appointed by President Barack Obama in February 2010 to serve as Executive Director of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition. She manages the activities and operations of the Council and leads the Council’s efforts related to First Lady Michelle Obama's national Let’s Move! initiative to solve childhood obesity within a generation. Shellie earned her BA in Community Health Education from the University of Northern Iowa and a MS in Exercise Physiology/Fitness Leadership from Northern Illinois University. She also has a certification in Non-Profit Management from Duke University and is a graduate of Leadership North Carolina Class XIII.

E. Paul Roetert, Ph.D., is the Chief Executive Officer of SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators, the largest organization of professionals involved in school-based health, physical education and physical activity. Founded in 1885, SHAPE America is committed to ensuring all children have the opportunity to lead healthy, physically active lives. Roetert has presented and published extensively, both nationally and internationally, in the fields of sports science and medicine, as well as coaching education, including four books, more than 25 book chapters and over 100 articles. He received his Ph.D. in biomechanics from the University of Connecticut and is a Fellow with the American College of Sports Medicine.

Joan Benoit Samuelson’s name is synonymous with women’s running. She began running track in high school in the town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine. Samuelson continued on to Bowdoin College, where her career soared. She received All-American honors in cross-country and track, and won the Boston Marathon in 1979, setting an American and course record, all before she graduated. Samuelson won the Boston Marathon again in 1983, this time breaking the world record. One year later, at the age of 27, she won the gold medal in the first women’s marathon at the Los Angeles Olympics. In 1985, Samuelson won the Chicago Marathon with an American record time of 2:21:21. Currently, she is a consultant to Nike, Inc. and a clinician, conducting numerous running, health, and fitness clinics throughout the United States and the world. Samuelson is also an experienced motivational speaker, giving regular addresses to corporations, civic groups, schools, and athletes. She has authored two books, her autobiography Running Tide (Knopf, 1987), and Joan Samuelson’s Running for Women (Rodale Press, 1995).

Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H., FAAFP serves as Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Prevention and Chief of the Center for Health Metrics and Evaluation for the American Heart Association (AHA). Prior to joining AHA, he served as Vice President and CMO for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) from 2008 to 2013. Dr. Sanchez led the Institute for Health Policy at the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) as Director from 2006 to 2008. From 2001 to 2006, he served as Texas Commissioner of Health, leading the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) from 2004 to 2006, the Texas Department of Health (TDH) from 2001 to 2004. Dr. Sanchez currently serves as Chair of the Texas Public Health Coalition (TPHC) and the National Commission on Prevention Priorities (NCPP). He co-chairs the Dallas Health and Wellness Alliance for Children. He serves on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Roundtable on Obesity Solutions and the National Quality Forum (NQF) Disparities Standing Committee. In addition, he is a member of the Trust for America’s Health Board of Directors and AcademyHealth’s Board of Directors. He is serving on the IOM Committee on Evaluating Approaches to Assessing Prevalence and Trends in Obesity, and he serves on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Health Policy Fellow Advisory Board.

James R. Whitehead is the CEO of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the world's largest international organization dedicated to sports medicine and exercise science. Jim has created and led many organizations that drive impact, including co-founding the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity and the Datalys Center on Sports Injury Research and Prevention. Jim has served as a speaker, panelist, and consultant for a large number of organizations, including the U.S. Olympic Committee and Walt Disney Imagineering. A graduate of the University of Alabama, Jim has a special focus on systematic approaches to innovation and social movement.