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United States Association of Blind Athletes and Anthem Foundation Partner to Empower People with Visual Impairments to Lead More Active Lifestyles
More than 450 people participating in USABA Fitness Challenge

Colorado Springs, Colo. (October 10, 2018) – The United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) is pleased to announce a \$340,000 grant from the Anthem Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Anthem, Inc to implement the National Fitness Challenge for the sixth consecutive year. For the next eight months, USABA will partner with 17 agencies across the United States to provide more than 450 blind and visually impaired youth and adults with opportunities to increase their physical fitness levels and live healthier, more active lives.

“The Anthem Foundation continues to empower and inspire youth and adults across the nation who are blind and visually impaired by supporting the National Fitness Challenge,” said Mark Lucas, executive director of USABA. “We are honored and excited to once again partner with the Anthem Foundation to cultivate healthier communities.”

Since 2011, Anthem Foundation has provided \$1.3 million in grant funding to U.S. Association of Blind Athletes for the National Fitness Challenge initiative and has impacted thousands of Americans with visual impairments by partnering with 40 different agencies across the country.

“The Anthem Foundation is committed to helping provide access to programs and services that help all individuals in our communities lead healthier lives,” said Stephen Friedhoff, MD, chief clinical officer at Anthem. “Through our partnership with USABA we are working to break down barriers, and leverage technology to help those with vision impairments enjoy the physical and emotional benefits of exercise and improve overall health and wellness.”

The goal of this program is to raise the physical activity levels of each participant to the level recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This year’s program will integrate the use of technology and social media to help the participants set goals, create team environments and encourage leadership. USABA will provide each participant with a Fitbit Flex 2 wearable, which provides a universal way to measure many kinds of activities, calories burned and the number of steps taken. Participants will also have the opportunity to utilize Fitbit Coach, a personalized training app that will give participants access to adaptive video workouts and audio coaching.

Agencies will host multiple events and sports programming through the eight-month program for NFC participants. Programming will include activities like tandem biking, beep baseball, yoga, rowing, skiing, running, goalball – a team sport specifically designed for blind and visually impaired athletes – and many others.



Research has consistently shown that individuals who participate in regular physical activity to improve their health have higher energy levels, a lower risk of health-related diseases, improved psychological health, and lower rates of depression and anxiety. Unfortunately, because of the numerous barriers and misconceptions about their abilities, more than half of those who are blind and visually impaired in the United States do not participate in even a limited physical fitness routine.

The funds from the Anthem Foundation grant will provide a Fitbit Flex 2 wearable for every participant, fitness and nutrition instruction, prizes for participants who excel, and technical and financial support for everyone participating in the program. Visit www.usaba.org/NationalFitnessChallenge for a list of participating agencies.

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About the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA)

Since its founding in 1976, U.S. Association of Blind Athletes, a community-based organization of the United States Olympic Committee, has reached more than 100,000 blind individuals. The organization has emerged as more than just a world-class trainer of blind athletes, it has become a champion of the abilities of Americans who are legally blind. USABA's mission: to empower Americans who are blind and visually impaired to experience live-changing opportunities in sports, recreation and physical activities, thereby educating and inspiring the nation.

<http://www.usaba.org> | Twitter: [@USABA](https://twitter.com/USABA) | Facebook: [United States Association of Blind Athletes](https://www.facebook.com/UnitedStatesAssociationofBlindAthletes)

About the Anthem Foundation

The Anthem Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Anthem, Inc. and through charitable contributions and programs, the Foundation promotes the inherent commitment of Anthem, Inc. to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Anthem, Inc. and its affiliated health plans serve. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These disease states and medical conditions include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company's annual associate giving campaign and provides a 50 percent match of associates' campaign pledges. To learn more about the Anthem Foundation, please visit www.anthem.foundation.org.