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COLUMBUS PUBLIC HEALTH – Press Release

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MAYOR ESTABLISHES INSTITUTE FOR ACTIVE LIVING

Health Commissioner appoints Barb Seckler as Director

Following up on his 2008 State of the City announcement to promote healthy living, Mayor Michael B. Coleman today announced the creation of the Institute for Active Living. The Institute will work to reduce childhood obesity by increasing our residents' access to physical activity and fresh food, and by implementing strategies to make Columbus a more active, vibrant place to live. Also today, Public Health Commissioner, Dr. Teresa Long, has named Barb Seckler as the new Director of the Institute.

"We need to protect our children by fighting their enemies - obesity and diabetes," said Mayor Coleman. "From walking and biking to farmers markets and grocery stores, this new initiative will focus on increasing our residents' access to fresh fruits and vegetables and physical activity."

The Institute will be connected to The Foundation for Active Living, a fund to be established at the Columbus Foundation by the Columbus Board of Health to accept corporate and private donations to support the work of the Institute. On July 14, Columbus City Council unanimously approved ordinance 1210-2008 to help establish the fund.

In the short term, the Institute will support the development of farmer's markets, community gardens, and policy-making that support active living. The Institute will bring together all city departments and dozens of stakeholders and partners to consider Active Living in city policy decisions from recreation centers and green space to sidewalks and bike ways.

"Columbus has among the nation's highest incidence of obesity and diabetes, said Public Health Commissioner Dr. Teresa Long. "By building a more active, vibrant city – we in turn will be building a healthier Columbus."

Seckler previously served as Assistant Director and Deputy Director at the Department of Public Safety since 2000.

Columbus Public Health will hold Farmers' Markets at 240 Parsons Avenue from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on July 31st, August 7th and August 14th. Locally grown fresh fruits and vegetable will be available for sale and there will be food stamp access. For more information, call 645-3111 or www.publichealth.columbus.gov.

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