

NEWS RELEASE

Humana Europe, Ltd
25 St George Street London W1S 1FS
humana.co.uk

HUMANA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Isabella Sharp

Humana Press Office

020 7526 3632 or 07831 307490

media@humana.co.uk

Humana's Horsepower Challenge sees UK school children gallop towards fitness

LONDON, UK – January 19 2009 – School children in Warwickshire are galloping towards the finish line as they take part in a unique challenge to promote exercise, team work and fight obesity. As they walk and run about during the course of the day, the children generate horsepower for virtual school buses racing against other schools in a unique online game.

The Horsepower Challenge, which has already been run successfully by Humana in schools in the US, is being piloted for the first time in the UK in a partnership with NHS Warwickshire and Warwickshire County Council as part of a wider initiative to help children tackle obesity and lead healthier lives. It will pit three primary schools in Warwickshire against each other, involving a total of 90 children from Boughton Leigh Juniors, Lillington Primary and Stockingford Juniors. The steps the children take are recorded by wireless web-enabled pedometers on their shoes and automatically uploaded to a specially designed online game. The number of steps taken by the children powers school buses on a virtual tour of the world, with the bus that travels the furthest to be declared the winner on 11th February.

The initiative is a fun way of getting children to be more active. Each classmate is represented by a cartoon horse (like an avatar) riding on board their school bus and, as they build up the number of steps they take, children can collect accessories for their horse, including iPod headphones, sunglasses and hairstyles, as well as work as a class to customise their bus in their school colours.

“The Horsepower Challenge can improve health by building on what kids are already doing, rather than trying to get them to totally change their behaviour,” says Dr Jonathan Lord, Chief Executive of Humana Europe. “The pilot programme we ran in the US saw a significant increase in the level of activity among participating children, with 95 percent reporting that it was fun.”

Helen King, NHS Warwickshire’s Director of Public Health, said: “The Horsepower Challenge has a part to play in our joint long-term strategy to tackle childhood obesity and support families in making positive lifestyle changes. This innovative scheme will encourage children to fit more physical activity into their daily lives and they will reap the benefits, including improved fitness and concentration.”

Kevin Smart, Head of Stockingford Junior School, said: “The Horsepower Challenge is a great way of combining the latest technologies with exercise, competition and most of all fun. The children are really looking forward to taking part.”

The Horsepower Challenge is one of a number of health and wellness partnerships that Humana is running with NHS organisations. These include the Stoke Community Wellness Programme, a partnership with NHS Stoke on Trent to help 3,000 people from the city manage long-term conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, which was nominated for an HSJ award in November 2008.

END

Notes to editors:

1. The Horsepower Challenge is a partnership between Humana Europe, NHS Warwickshire and Warwickshire County Council to promote healthy exercise amongst children of primary school age. The Challenge is being launched on 19th January by Bryan Steel, a former Olympic medalist in cycling, at the Castle Farm Recreation Centre in Kenilworth. A total of 90 Year 6 children from Boughton Leigh Juniors, Lillington Primary and Stockingford Juniors have until the 11th February to accrue steps and power their virtual school buses around the world. Photos and graphics available on request.

2. Headquartered in London since 2006, Humana Europe delivers expert commissioning services and support to the NHS in England. We are recognised as leaders in designing, developing and implementing innovative programmes, tools and solutions to support Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to commission care in line with the health needs of their local populations. Our goal is to achieve a sustained improvement in public health through a unique combination of effective commissioning and empowering individuals to take control of their health.

For more information please visit www.humana.co.uk