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For immediate release

Medcenter One pediatrician helps Boy Scouts get fit

BISMARCK, N.D.—This summer, Dr. Stephen McDonough, a pediatrician at Medcenter One, was one of 16 national Boy Scout leaders to complete the “Walk the Walk” initiative, as he earned the President’s Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) by exercising at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week for six out of eight weeks. Dr. McDonough was selected by Boy Scouts of America to help its alliance with first lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” program and the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.

“It was an honor to be asked by the Boy Scouts to help its efforts to improve fitness for Boy Scouts, parents and volunteers” Dr. McDonough said. “The challenge is something that anyone can do. It is free and a great motivator to exercise, which improves both physical fitness and mental health.”

To earn the PALA, people must track their exercise on an online fitness log available at presidentschallenge.com. First lady Obama has made the challenge a priority as part of “Let’s Move,” and her goal is to have a million Americans earn the PALA by September 2011. The Boy Scouts have launched a healthy living initiative and are aim to have 500,000 Scouts earn their PALA over the next three years.

Dr. McDonough recently attended the “Top Hands” national Boy Scouts meeting in San Antonio where he received the newly created Scouting PALA activity badge. The 16 national Scouting leaders issued a challenge to all Scouts, parents and volunteers to achieve PALA badges as well.

“Scouts pledge in the Scout Oath to be physically fit” said Mark G. Holtz, Scout executive of the Northern Lights Council. “We are thrilled to have Dr. McDonough here in North Dakota to help lead this important national initiative”.

Dr. McDonough is also working with Troop 123 of Bismarck on PALA this summer. More than 50 Scouts and parents in Troop 123 have registered with PALA, and many completed the award this summer. Children and adolescents need to exercise 60 minutes a day, five days a week for six out of eight weeks to earn the award. Troop 123 operates from Faith Lutheran Church in Bismarck.

Dr. McDonough serves on several Boy Scout committees: Boy Scouts of America, Dallas, Health and Safety Committee; Northern Lights Council, Fargo, Strategic Planning Committee for Youth Advocacy and Strategic Relationships; and the District Committee, Frontier Trails District, Bismarck. In 2010, he was appointed by President Obama to the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition.

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The Northern Lights Council, Boy Scouts of America is a non-profit serving more than 14,880 youth with 3,896 registered adult leaders throughout the entire state of North Dakota, 18 counties in NW Minnesota and 2 counties each in South Dakota and Montana. The Northern Lights Council is a United Way Agency.