

Adam Crum
Commissioner

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**Department of Health
and Social Services**

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February summit and special events support healthy, active Alaska children DHSS commissioner Adam Crum to give the keynote address at PLAAY Summit

Jan. 28, 2020 – Three events in February focus on improving the health of Alaska children and celebrate hundreds of kids being physically active, all at the same time. It's not too late to sign up for any event in this series.

Event One: Teachers, professionals and youth leaders are encouraged to register for PLAAY Summit

The PLAAY Summit kicks off the series on Friday, Feb. 14, and Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020, on the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium campus in Anchorage. PLAAY stands for Positive Leadership for Active Alaska Youth. The two-day summit is designed to help teachers, medical professionals, coaches and other leaders focus on improving youth health and emphasize the importance of daily physical activity.

"Daily physical activity is so important for kids. It helps them grow up at a healthy weight and decreases their chances of getting diabetes, heart disease, and many types of cancer. It can reduce anxiety and depression, and it can help youth focus and excel in the classroom," said Adam Crum, commissioner for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. "We can work together to support more activity for Alaska kids. Only 1 out of 5 Alaska high school students meets the recommendation for 60 minutes of daily physical activity."

Commissioner Crum will give the keynote address at noon Feb. 14. He will talk about the overall state of health for Alaska children. Dr. Jay Butler will discuss health harms related to e-cigarettes. Butler is Alaska's former Chief Medical Officer and the current Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Other speakers will talk about heart health, mental health and more. [Go online](#) to register for the PLAAY Summit. Registration will remain open through the event, so long as seating remains available. Professional development credit and contact hours will be available. The event is in Anchorage, but those outside Anchorage can participate through video conference after registering online at www.plaay.org.

Event Two: Elementary schools statewide can sign up for PLAAY Day

For the fourth year in a row, elementary schools can sign up for the free PLAAY Day – when children all across the state can get moving at the same time. This year, PLAAY Day kicks off at 10 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020, and will continue for 30 minutes. This year, a trio of Alaska dancers will teach kids fun ways to move, from ballroom to hip hop to Alaska Native dancing.

Staff at elementary schools can still [sign up online](#). They can sign up individual classrooms or the entire school to participate. Registration will remain open through Feb. 20, but schools can receive more help connecting to the live event if they sign up sooner. PLAAY Day is directed by the [Alaska Sports Hall of Fame](#) and [Healthy Futures](#) programs, with support of partners like the State of Alaska [Play Every Day campaign](#).

Event Three: The public is invited to attend a free talk by Olympic gold medalist Anthony Ervin

Olympic swimmer Anthony Ervin will give a public talk from 7-8:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020, at Atwood Hall on the Alaska Pacific University campus in Anchorage. After winning a gold medal at the 2000 Olympics, Ervin retired from swimming and then struggled with drugs, alcohol and depression. He returned to swimming and won another gold medal at the 2016 Olympics. On Feb. 20, Ervin will talk about the highs and lows of his swimming career, his struggles, and the importance of building a strong network of support when you need help. No registration is needed for this event and anyone is welcome, but seating is limited.

For more information about any of these events, visit www.plaay.org.

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