



## **Columbia University Organizes Healthy Monday Initiative**

*Keith O'Brien PR Week USA Oct 11 2006*

NEW YORK: A consortium of companies and organizations, spearheaded by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, has launched Healthy Monday, a promotion effort intended to imbue the public with a goal to get healthier at the start of each week.

Healthy Monday will focus on poor behavioral choices - such as smoking, overeating, unprotected sex, or inactivity - that negatively affect people's health. Partners include Jenny Craig, the Legacy Foundation, the American Heart Association, and Fresh Direct.

"There is a multitude of information out there, but because our government and NGOs' [campaigns] are not well-funded, the messages are not out there frequently," said Dr. Audrey Cross, Healthy Monday campaign director. "We wanted to anchor a day around which health is focused."

Healthy Monday is handling its PR in-house, but would consider working with an agency seeking a pro bono relationship. The organization is reaching out to prospective partners, including PR firms, to either encourage them to pursue their own programs or work with Healthy Monday or another interested party. Cross said the organization has focused its initial press outreach on trades in order to align with more partners before it takes its message to the masses.

"Communications programs can go from running ads or doing TV marketing to setting up worksite wellness programs," Cross said.

A Web site, [HealthyMonday.org](http://HealthyMonday.org), includes a number of digital pamphlets on how to burn extra calories, help cafeteria workers create healthy options, and quit smoking.

The group is also working on a Spanish-language Web site and has already worked with Head Start to create a healthy cooking program.

"In a dream world, everyone will have a Healthy Monday Web site in every language," Cross said.