

Cash prizes to be offered in weight-loss contest

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A New York City-based on-line health and wellness company wants to help Michiganders cut the fat out of their lives, and they'll pay money to help residents do it.

Just in time to for New Year's weight-loss resolutions, HealthyWage™ (www.HealthyWage.com) has announced a statewide weight-loss competition called the Michigan Matchup.

It encourages family members, friends and neighbors to form groups of five to compete for a total of \$18,000 in cash. Additionally, it's urging corporations to form at-work teams to compete against teams from other companies.

The teams will compete for a grand prize of \$10,000, which will go to the team with the

greatest percentage of weight lost from Jan. 8 — the day registration closes — to April 15. The team that takes second place will get \$5,000 and the third-place team will get \$3,000.

"Competing in teams of five against family, friends and co-workers for added encouragement, bragging rights and big cash prizes leverages our social network model proven to help motivate and sustain weight loss," HealthyWage cofounder David Roddenberry said in a news release. "Academic research shows that obesity has spread through social networks and will likely reverse through social networks."

Each participant must pay a \$60 registration fee and weigh in at the beginning and end of the contest at a local health club. More than 90 health clubs throughout Michigan will sup-

port contestants and serve as weigh-in locations.

Participants also qualify for an additional \$100 cash prize if they start with a Body Mass Index (BMI) above 30 and achieve a BMI below 25 after one year.

Grand Rapids-based personal trainer Mighty Joe Stankowski, creator of the "This Workout Doesn't Suck" fitness support program (www.ThisWorkout.com), will serve as the official spokesman and is to offer contestants advice, support and motivation via weekly telephone conference calls.

To register or for more information, visit www.michiganmatchup.com.

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