

Univ. of Alabama Graduates Encourage Participation in Scale Back Alabama

For immediate release: Jan. 2, 2012

Contact: Rosemary Blackmon, Alabama Hospital Association, (800) 489-2542

Or Miriam Gaines, Alabama Department of Public Health (334) 206-5649

Two University of Alabama graduates and Biggest Loser winners are encouraging Alabamians to sign up for the 2012 Scale Back Alabama Contest. Olivia Ward won the 11th season Biggest Loser contest, and her sister, Hannah Curlee, was the first runner up. Ward, an opera singer, and Curlee, a hospital system wellness coordinator, now spend most of their time traveling the country spreading the message about the need for Americans to eat less and move more. Scale Back Alabama is a 10-week, statewide weight loss contest in which teams of four adults compete to win cash prizes and get healthy. The contest is free of charge and begins Jan. 21.

At the age of 35, Ward was told she would most likely never be able to have children unless she lost weight. Her sister, a high school homecoming queen and star athlete, began having issues with her weight following an accident and subsequent back surgery that ended her sports career. Both women competed in the national Biggest Loser TV challenge and lost 129 pounds and 120 pounds, respectively.

“As a true southern girl and a University of Alabama graduate, the state holds a special place in my heart, and I would want nothing more this year than for us to take the obesity rate and reverse it,” said Olivia Ward. “What an amazing opportunity with Scale Back Alabama for us to take our state back as far as health is concerned. It is time to grab your friends, your co-workers and your family and Scale Back Alabama.”

“I would love nothing better than to be leading a big “Roll Tide” at the closing ceremony of Scale Back Alabama in celebration of a huge weight loss,” said Hannah Curlee. “Olivia and I know what it takes, and we just want to share the encouragement and help Alabamians struggling with weight challenges to get back on track.”

Scale Back Alabama, now in its sixth year, has resulted in a total weigh loss of almost 760,000 pounds and a healthier lifestyle for thousands of individuals. Last year 33,000 Alabamians participated. To participate in Scale Back Alabama, teams of four register and have their initial weigh in at a local site during the week of January 21 – 27 (weigh-in sites will be listed on www.scalebackalabama.com in mid January). Throughout the 10-week contest, participants will be encouraged to eat better and to exercise, with a goal of losing one pound per week.

Scale Back Alabama is sponsored by Alabama’s hospitals and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.