National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
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TO: Distribution

FROM: Chief Health and Medical Officer

SUBJECT: 2004 *HealthierFeds* Physical Activity Challenge

In 2002, the President's *HealthierUS* was launched to encourage Americans to take steps to improve personal health and fitness by: (1) being physically active every day; (2) eating a nutritious diet; (3) getting preventive screenings; and (4) making healthy choices. Several other ongoing initiatives go hand in hand with *HealthierUS*, including *Healthy People 2010* spearheaded by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and NASA's own *Healthier NASA* launched this month by the Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer.

As part of the President's *HealthierUS* initiative, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, DHHS have joined to implement *HealthierFeds* to serve as a model for federal agencies and private industry. The campaign for *HealthierFeds* includes "challenges" to encourage federal government agencies and employees to "become more aware of health lifestyles and to take personal responsibility for their own health." Participation levels at each Agency will be tracked during this 6-week initiative.

NASA's Healthcare System has long supported initiatives and programs that encourage healthier lifestyles, such as exercise, and proper nutrition for its employees and their families. A recent study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that 65 percent of U.S. adults (about 129.6 million people) are either overweight or obese. The CDC study also showed that deaths due to poor diet and physical inactivity rose by 33 percent over the past decade and may soon overtake tobacco as the leading preventable cause of death.

OPM and DHHS have asked NASA and all other Federal Agencies to participate in their *HealthierFeds* campaign. You are encouraged to urge all your employees to accept the six-week *HealthierFeds* challenge by registering at http://www.healthierfeds.gov as soon as possible. We believe that taking 30 minutes out of your day, 5 days per week for 6 weeks will be beneficial and help create a "routine" of regular exercise for employees and their families.

Always, as with all types of new exercise, employees should consult a physician first to ensure it is safe to start a new regime. Exercise need not be strenuous to be beneficial—moderate walking is a generally safe activity easily incorporated into your daily routine.