

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner
210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

For Immediate Release

CONTACT: Ingrid Antonio
PHONE: 443-984-2623
mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov

City Agencies Promote Health and Conservation... One Step at a Time

Baltimore, MD August 4, 2008.– Director of Public Works David Scott and Health Commissioner Joshua M. Sharfstein launched a campaign today to urge city residents to take the stairs when possible, saving calories and electricity.

The campaign will include posting signs with a visually appealing logo in city buildings. The signs are available for download and use by anyone in the city at <http://baltimorehealth.org>.

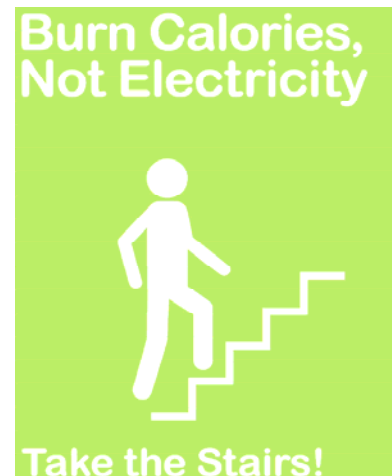
The campaign supports the Mayor's efforts for a healthy and sustainable Baltimore. The bold, simple logos were developed by New York City under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has granted permission for Baltimore's use. Studies suggest that visual prompts can boost stair use by more than 50%.

"Every day, we each have chances to improve our health and save electricity," said Mayor Sheila Dixon. "Taking the stairs when possible is a doubly good choice."

"We are pleased to partner with the Health Department in taking this health and environmental message around the city," said Director Scott. "Saving electricity on elevators will also mean lower costs for city government and city residents." All signs are scheduled to be installed by November 1, 2008.

An escalator that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, can use 28,000 kilowatt hours of energy over the course of a year. That equates to 43,000 pounds of carbon dioxide – more than three times the amount a car produces.

The New York City Department of Health has noted:



- Stair-climbing burns almost 7 times the number of calories you burn standing on an elevator.
- Just two minutes of stair-climbing each day burns enough calories to eliminate the one pound an average adult gains each year.
- Men who climbed at least 20 floors a week (about 3 floors a day) had a 20% lower risk of stroke or death from all causes, in one study.
- Stair-climbing has been shown to raise good cholesterol and improve cardiovascular health.

“This effort can reduce heart disease and obesity in Baltimore while furthering the goal of energy independence,” said Dr. Sharfstein. “We thank New York and all participating agencies and businesses.”

For more information and copies of the signs to download, please visit www.baltimorehealth.org

###