

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **Peoples Health Champions Honored at First Four Saints Home Games**

**Metairie, La.** - The Peoples Health Champions program has honored its first four champions of the 2011-2012 NFL football season. Legendary New Orleans performer **Chris Owens**, its first champion, was honored on Friday, August 12 during the New Orleans Saints game against the San Francisco 49ers. Belle Chasse resident **Nissan Zahavi**, its second champion, was honored on Thursday, September 1 during the New Orleans Saints game against the Tennessee Titans. Third champion and New Orleans native **Ellis Marsalis Sr.** was honored on Sunday, September 18 during the New Orleans Saints game against the Chicago Bears. And fourth champion **J.W. “Bill” Cocreham**, who lives in Baton Rouge, was honored on Sunday, September 25 during the New Orleans Saints game against the Houston Texans. A Peoples Health Champion is someone who has done something extraordinary after age 65 and who proves that excellence is achieved through experience.

#### **Peoples Health Champion Chris Owens**

On April 24, 2011, after the age of 65, Chris Owens welcomed thousands of revelers to the Chris Owens French Quarter Easter Parade. Launched in 1983 as a festive occasion for locals to showcase their fashionable finery, the event grew increasingly popular over the years. Now featuring elaborate floats, live music and Easter-themed throws, this year’s parade confirmed its transformation from local celebration to bona-fide tourist destination.

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### **Peoples Health Champion Nissan Zahavi**

On April 27, 2004, at the age of 67, Nissan Zahavi earned his 4th degree black belt from the United States Judo Federation. Introduced to judo 31 years earlier, Zahavi never faltered in his commitment to a sport frequently cited as the most demanding form of martial arts. Defying the challenges, Zahavi, now 74, expects to earn his 5th degree black belt soon.

### **Peoples Health Champion Ellis Marsalis Sr.**

On August 25, 2011, at age 76, Ellis Marsalis Sr. opened the door to a new institution devoted to preserving and nurturing New Orleans music and culture, the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music. Funded through private donations and supported by professional musicians from all over the world, the Ellis Marsalis Center for Music celebrates the influence of New Orleans culture on developing artists and their art—something Marsalis has experienced a thousand-fold as teacher and mentor to countless artists at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.

### **Peoples Health Champion J.W. “Bill” Cocreham**

On July 24, 2003, at the age of 77, Bill Cocreham successfully negotiated the donation of the old Sears building on Florida Boulevard to the Baton Rouge Recreation and Parks Commission (BREC). A generous gift from local contractor Milton J. Womack and his associates, the 140,000-square-foot building and its 26 acres of grounds are now a thriving hub for BREC’s administrative offices. The renovated facility also includes a centralized warehouse and storage facility, and activity spaces for meetings, classes and exhibits.

### ***About Peoples Health Champions***

In collaboration with the New Orleans Saints, the Peoples Health Champions Program honors individuals who shatter the myth that ability diminishes after the age of 65 and who

instead prove that excellence is achieved through experience. Nominees must be at least 65 years of age and reside in southeast Louisiana or the Mississippi Gulf Coast. For more information about the program, including details on how to nominate someone as a Peoples Health Champion, visit *champions.peopleshealth.com*. Nominations can be submitted online, or call (877) 712-7320 for a nomination form.

### ***About Peoples Health***

Established in 1994, Peoples Health is a Medicare Advantage organization serving Medicare beneficiaries in southeast Louisiana. The physician-owned company has over 600 employees who help administer and provide a unique approach to wellness, care coordination and support services for plan members. The company is a proud supporter of many social, cultural, athletic and health organizations and holds an accreditation by URAC. For more information about Peoples Health, visit *www.peopleshealth.com*.

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