



**Covenant Health
Knoxville Marathon 2011**



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NEWS RELEASE

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COVENANT HEALTH EXTENDS MARATHON RUN FOR THREE MORE YEARS

2011 Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon Set for April 3

Covenant Health will continue its support of East Tennessee's largest road race by sponsoring the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon for the next three years, officials announced today. Covenant Health has been the presenting sponsor of the marathon since the inaugural event in 2005.

"We are very pleased to continue our sponsorship of an event that promotes individual fitness among children and adults and a healthier community overall," said Tony Spezia, president and CEO of Covenant Health. "As East Tennessee's largest health system, Covenant Health is committed to providing programs to improve the health and quality of life in East Tennessee, and our marathon sponsorship supports this mission."

The Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon is an annual weekend-long event held in early spring with a health and fitness expo and five different running events: a 26.2-mile marathon, 13.1-mile half-marathon, four-person marathon relay, 5K run and one-mile fun run for children 12 and under. The race course showcases many of Knoxville's scenic neighborhoods, and as the largest competitive road race in East Tennessee, the event brings tourist dollars to the community.

Participation in the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon over six years has doubled, growing from 2,900 total registered runners in 2005 to nearly 6,000 this year.

"We've heard and witnessed dozens of fantastic stories about how the marathon has motivated people to start exercising and to improve their health," Spezia said. "These stories and the increase in participation among runners and walkers of all ages and fitness levels demonstrate the marathon's success in bringing about positive change and better health in our community."

The Knoxville Track Club (KTC) is excited to be working with Covenant Health again to present three more years of world-class marathons, according to Jason Altman, executive director of the marathon.

“It’s great news that Covenant Health has signed on to continue to support this important event, and it demonstrates a genuine commitment to the community at large and to the local sport of running,” said Altman. “Covenant Health’s sponsorship experience and dedication to community wellness bring additional value to the event.”

As a premier event organized by the KTC, marathon proceeds benefit KTC youth track and field development programs. With Covenant Health’s new three-year sponsorship agreement, a portion of the proceeds also will go to support the Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center’s Innovative Recreation Cooperative (IRC). IRC encourages people with disabilities to pursue leisure and sports activities including handcycling, which is one of the races included in the marathon.

In addition to serving as the title sponsor, Covenant Health physicians, therapists, exercise trainers and sports medicine experts provide a host of services and programs throughout the year to help people train and prepare for long distance runs.

Covenant Health fitness expert and Olympic runner Missy Kane coaches a team of race participants to victory each year and participates in KTC Saturday morning training runs open to the public. Fort Sanders Health & Fitness Center staff provide special training classes for beginners as well as experienced runners. Covenant Therapy Centers staff offer a runner’s evaluation screening, provide finish-line first aid care and therapeutic stretching services and offer free post-race injury clinics in four counties to assess post-race pain or problems.

A signature feature of the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon is the exciting finish on the 50-yard-line inside the University of Tennessee’s Neyland Stadium, where runners are broadcast over the stadium’s JumboTron as they cross the finish line.

Altman said that the City of Knoxville and University of Tennessee are important partners in the event and contribute greatly to the event’s success.

“I look forward to working with Covenant Health, the City of Knoxville and University of Tennessee to continue to enhance and grow the marathon,” Altman said. “We want Knoxville to be the fittest city in Tennessee, and with a sponsorship commitment in place for three more years, the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon is a huge step in that direction.”

Details about registration for the 2011 event will be announced in late summer.

About the Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon

The Covenant Health Knoxville Marathon is a premier event organized by the Knoxville Track Club, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the encouragement of physical well being through running, jogging, competitive road racing, race walking, fun runs, cross country, and track and field.

About Covenant Health

Covenant Health is a community-owned health system providing comprehensive health services throughout East Tennessee. Headquartered in Knoxville, Covenant Health includes six acute care hospitals as well as numerous outpatient services. The health system also includes specialty providers of behavioral, oncology and rehabilitation services along with home care, physician clinics and community wellness programs. Covenant Health has more than 1,200 affiliated physicians and 9,500 employees.