



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

FPG CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

SHERYL-MAR BUILDING
CAMPUS BOX 8185
CHAPEL HILL, NC 27599-8185
www.fpg.unc.edu

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James H. Rimmer, Ph.D.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
on Recreational Technologies and Exercise Physiology
RERC Rectech
University of Illinois at Chicago
1640 West Roosevelt, Suite 712
Chicago, IL 60608

Dear Dr. Rimmer:

I am writing to confirm that the North Carolina Office on Disability and Health (NCODH) has used the research performed by RERC Rectech regarding the development and validation of AIMFREE as well as the accessibility of health clubs for people with disabilities to develop our own scope of work and secure funding in order to develop action plans for rapid and cost-effective improvements in the accessibility of recreation and fitness venues in North Carolina. We are using a collaborative problem-solving approach, as conceptualized by RERC Rectech in the literature, as our current standard of practice in this area.

Using this type of approach which holds participatory action research as its core, NCODH currently seeks out local fitness facilities, schedules workshops that includes training on the Americans with Disabilities Act and principles of universal design and a facility survey and environmental observations by our staff, facility representatives and community advocates. We assist the host agency with the development of an action plan for improving accessibility based on that facility's current physical and financial situation and survey findings. Since 2002 we have conducted and supported at least 40 environmental assessments and workshops across our state.

NCODH was also involved in the creation of a new specialty certification from the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) called the Certified Inclusive Fitness Trainer (CIFT). With our familiarity of the research from RERC Rectech in creating the AIMFREE and other fitness environment resources, NCODH was able to help create change in the education of fitness professionals regarding accessible commercial fitness equipment, adaptive equipment, barriers to fitness facilities and programs, support mechanisms to make facilities more accessible by addressing principles of Universal Design and aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other legal guidelines that specifically apply to fitness environments.

We look forward to continued collaboration to further refine the approach in the future.

Sincerely,

Karen Luken

Karen Luken, M.S.R.A
Investigator, Project Director
NC Office on Disability and Health
FPG Child Development Institute
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill