



CONTACT: John Chobanian
(615) 610-1881

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Governor's Foundation Releases Study on Costs of Preventable Disease

Applauds launch of new Tennessee Legislative Wellness Caucus to focus on health challenges

NASHVILLE – The Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness today released a new study conducted by the Sycamore Institute that confirms Tennessee's higher rates of chronic diseases have significant economic consequences, costing state taxpayers more than \$5.3 billion in 2015.

Governor's Foundation CEO Richard Johnson presented highlights of the study during a media event to announce the newly formed bipartisan Tennessee Legislative Wellness Caucus, co-chaired by Representative Ryan Williams and Senator Bo Watson. The 37-member Wellness Caucus was developed in partnership with the Governor's Foundation, and it will focus on critical health and wellness issues facing Tennesseans.

"It is important to understand that chronic but preventable diseases have a very significant and negative impact on our state's economy – and on our own pocketbooks," said Johnson. "This study underscores the fact that they result in direct and indirect costs to us as individuals and taxpayers. Health issues are economic issues, too.

"It's time to take seriously what has now reached a crisis stage in Tennessee, and the new Legislative Wellness Caucus is an important step in the right direction. We are very pleased to partner with these leaders to explore meaningful policies that will promote improved wellness at the state level while local citizens participate in community-based programs."

Key findings from the study include:

- Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease affected 460,000 additional Tennesseans in 2015 due to state prevalence rates exceeding the national rates;
- The excess burden of these three diseases alone cost Tennessee nearly \$5.3 billion in 2015 in direct medical care, lost productivity, and premature death;
- Excess rates of type 2 diabetes cost an estimated \$1 billion, hypertension \$336 million, cardiovascular disease \$3.9 billion, and smoking \$2.7 billion.

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To read the full study, visit <http://www.sycamoreinstitutetn.org/2017/11/15/cost-chronic-disease-tennessee/>. For more information about the Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness, visit <http://healthierTN.com>

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About the Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness

The Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness is a non-profit corporation dedicated to enabling and encouraging Tennesseans to lead healthier lives. Based in Nashville, the Foundation brings together a statewide coalition of employers, health insurers, hospital systems, local governments, school systems and healthcare-focused foundations and community organizations to effect positive, measurable change. The Foundation's Healthier Tennessee initiative strives to increase the number of Tennesseans who are physically active for at least 30 minutes five times a week, promote a healthy diet, and reduce the number of people who use tobacco.