



**CONTACT:** Molly Sudderth  
(615) 610-1879

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Celebrate Healthier Tennessee Week March 27-31**

*Nine communities to be declared Healthier Tennessee Communities*

**NASHVILLE** – Gov. Bill Haslam has declared March 27-31 as Healthier Tennessee Week. The Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness is encouraging all Tennesseans to make healthier choices, including getting more physical activity, eating more fresh fruits and vegetables and abstaining from tobacco this week and every week throughout the year, and to share their healthy activities on social media using #healthierTNweek.

“Our state’s greatest resource is its citizens, and their health and well-being is critical to the quality of life in Tennessee, yet we consistently rank among the least healthy states in the nation,” Governor’s Foundation CEO Richard Johnson said. “With help and encouragement, almost all of us have the opportunity to change the way we live, eat healthier, be more physically active, and stay away from tobacco.”

To mark Healthier Tennessee Week, Gov. Haslam will join the foundation on Tuesday, March 28 at 7:30 a.m. at Waller Law in Nashville for a breakfast recognition ceremony to designate nine cities or counties as Healthier Tennessee Communities.

The community designation event will also kick off Healthier Tennessee Day on the Hill, a chance for community leaders to meet with their elected representatives to highlight the impact of the Healthier Tennessee Communities program across the state and the value of effective preventative health initiatives.

In Tennessee, one in five adults smokes, and one in five high school students uses tobacco. Approximately 34 percent of the population is classified as obese, and type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure are at near epidemic levels.

Healthier Tennessee Communities are those that encourage and enable more physical activity, healthy eating and tobacco abstinence at the local level. The program takes a community-wide approach to improving Tennesseans’ health by engaging the local leaders of cities, towns, counties and neighborhoods.

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The foundation launched the Healthier Tennessee Communities initiative in March 2015 with nine pilot communities. Today, 78 communities are engaged with the program and 15 have already received the designation.

More information about Healthier Tennessee Week, Healthier Tennessee Communities, and the Foundation's other initiatives is available at [www.healthierTN.com](http://www.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.