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Governor Haslam Designates Healthier Tennessee Communities

Three East Tennessee communities recognized for helping citizens live healthier

LOUDON, Tenn. – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness CEO Richard Johnson today designated three East Tennessee communities as Healthier Tennessee Communities. The recognition honors Loudon and McMinn counties and the city of Kingsport for their work to improve the health of their citizens.

“Community-led efforts like the ones we’re celebrating today are critical to improving the health and quality of life of Tennesseans,” Haslam said. “I congratulate these communities on their efforts to encourage and enable healthy living, and I hope all Tennessee communities will strive to do the same.”

The Healthier Tennessee Communities initiative takes a local approach to improving Tennesseans’ health by engaging citizens and local leaders in cities, towns, counties and neighborhoods across the state.

To be designated, the communities established wellness councils and developed sustainable community-wide events and activities that support physical activity, healthy eating and tobacco abstinence. They then tracked and measured outputs and accomplishments of the programs. The designation is for two years. Communities will be responsible for maintaining or growing their efforts in order to renew the designation.

“These communities have elevated the importance of health and wellness and are working to make it an integral part of life in their cities and counties,” Johnson said. “If we can continue to do this, community by community, we will make this a healthier Tennessee.”

In Tennessee, one in four adults smokes, and one in five high school students uses tobacco. Approximately 31 percent of the population is classified as obese and an additional 34 percent are overweight, and type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure are at epidemic levels.

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The foundation launched the Healthier Tennessee Communities initiative in March 2015 with nine pilot communities, including Kingsport and Loudon and McMinn counties. Four communities in West Tennessee recently received the designation and 40 additional cities and counties are currently vying to achieve it.

Counties currently working to become Healthier Tennessee Communities include: Anderson, Bedford, Benton, Blount, Carroll, Chester, Cocke, Crockett, Cumberland, Dickson, Franklin, Gibson, Giles, Grundy, Haywood, Henderson, Hickman, Jefferson, Lake, Lauderdale, Macon, Marion, Marshall, Maury, McNairy, Meigs, Obion, Rhea, Tipton, Trousdale, Weakley and Wilson.

The cities taking part are: Arlington, Clarksville, Collegedale, Cookeville, Crossville, Franklin, Spring Hill and Tullahoma.

More information about the communities program and other Healthier Tennessee initiatives is available at www.healthierTN.com. Cities and counties interested in becoming a Healthier Tennessee Community should contact the Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness at tennessee@healthierstate.org or (615) 610-1880.

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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.