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Governor's Foundation Launches "Small Starts for Families"

Free, online wellness tool provides help to parents and caregivers of young children

NASHVILLE – The Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness, through its Healthier Tennessee initiative, today launched Small Starts for Families™, a free, online wellness tool to help parents and caregivers of children from birth to early childhood create healthier lives for the ones they love.

The Small Starts for Families tool presents simple actions families can do each day to live healthier. The actions are designed to encourage physical activity, nutritious eating, sound sleep habits, and the prevention of exposure to second-hand smoke. They are easy to do and cost little or nothing.

"We now know that the habits and health outcomes of a lifetime begin to be formed when children are in their first years of life, so it's vitally important that we as parents and caregivers help our kids get a good first start," Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness CEO Richard Johnson said. "A healthy lifestyle helps prevent chronic diseases and poor health conditions, and it can also have a positive impact on a child's academic success and future well-being. It enables them to lead happier, better lives."

Created with input from pediatric physicians and specialists around the state, the tool gives users access to more than 60 Small Starts® and allows them to select ones for their families based on their individual needs. The tool is available at www.healthierTN.com/families.

While the rates of obesity and of smoking in Tennessee are still high and the rate of regular exercise is low compared to other states, recent surveys from the Centers for Disease Control show that obesity has declined, exercise has increased, and the number of people smoking has remained basically flat. Diseases like Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and COPD and asthma remain at or near epidemic levels in the state.

Small Starts for Families is the latest addition to the online suite of Small Starts® wellness resources offered by the Governor's Foundation, including a series of more than 60 personal health challenges for individuals; Small Starts @ Work™, a wellness toolkit for use in workplaces; and Small Starts @ Worship™, with tips and programs geared toward faith-based communities.

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The foundation has also released Streaks for Small Starts™, an engaging app that helps users make healthy choices, track their progress, and receive encouraging reminders and motivation.

To learn more about the foundation's work and to explore their Small Starts suite of tools, visit 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.