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**Healthier Tennessee Launches “Small Starts @ Worship”**

*New congregational wellness toolkit available online at no cost*

**NASHVILLE** – The Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness, through its Healthier Tennessee initiative, today announced the launch of “Small Starts @ Worship,” an online wellness toolkit for faith communities. It is available at no cost to congregations across the state at [www.healthierTN.com](http://www.healthierTN.com).

“Places of worship play an integral role in our communities. They are places where we find support, develop relationships and nourish our spirits,” Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness CEO Rick Johnson said. “Creating cultures of wellness in these important and influential settings can strengthen our bodies as well as our souls.”

Small Starts @ Worship provides faith leaders with tips, ideas and actions to help members get healthier together. It is simple to use and can be adapted for congregations of all sizes. The toolkit is optimized for use on desktops, tablets and smartphones.

Tennessee consistently ranks among the least healthy states in the nation. Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure are at near epidemic levels, the rate of obesity has risen from 10 percent to 31 percent since 1988, only three states have higher rates of tobacco use, and our children now have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

The Foundation’s Healthier Tennessee initiative is offering free, easily accessible ways for Tennesseans to start being more active, eating healthier, and not using tobacco. Available at [www.healthierTN.com](http://www.healthierTN.com), the Small Starts tools can be used by individuals, workplaces and, now, faith congregations.

Healthier Tennessee launched Start Now, a statewide awareness campaign, in October 2013, Small Starts, a series of more than 60 personal health challenges for individuals, in January, and Small Starts @ Work, a wellness toolkit for the workplace. Small Starts @ Worship is the latest part of the effort to encourage healthier living in Tennessee.

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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.

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