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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Healthier Tennessee Partners with UT Extension Services to Broaden Reach**  
*Annual development conference to feature initiative training; launch partnership*

**NASHVILLE** – The Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness, through its Healthier Tennessee initiative, has created a partnership with the University of Tennessee (UT) Extension to promote Healthier Tennessee in all of the state’s 95 counties.

“We have said from the beginning this effort must be locally owned and implemented in order to be successful,” Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness CEO Rick Johnson said. “This new partnership will engage a statewide network of community leaders to assist in fostering local participation and ownership of wellness programs.”

Through this new partnership, UT Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents in each county will be on the ground encouraging workplaces and faith communities to start wellness programs and helping them through the process. They will be key to the Foundation’s local implementation process, encouraging people and groups to take advantage of its free, online wellness toolkits, Small Starts, Small Starts @ Work and Small Starts @ Worship.

"Through this partnership Family and Consumer Sciences Extension agents will have a unique opportunity to use the Small Starts toolkits to empower worksite and faith based organizations to support healthy choices at work and worship in easy, doable ways for lifelong impacts," UT Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Assistant Dean and Professor Dr. Laura Stephenson said.

To launch this new partnership, UT Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents will learn about the Healthier Tennessee initiative and be introduced to its Small Starts tools during their annual professional development conference today in Murfreesboro.

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They will gain insight from a panel discussion including wellness program experts:

- Kevin Anton, retired vice president and chief sustainability officer, ALCOA;
- Lynn Hipp, global integrated health & wellness manager, Eastman Chemical Company;
- Rosalee Sites, parish nurse resource manager, Wellmont Health System; and
- Sandi Tucker, benefits manager, Ring Companies.

### **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.

### **About UT Extension Services**

UT Extension provides a gateway to the University of Tennessee as the outreach unit of the Institute of Agriculture. With an office in every Tennessee county, UT Extension delivers educational programs and research-based information to citizens throughout the state. In cooperation with Tennessee State University, UT Extension works with farmers, families, youth and communities to improve lives by addressing problems and issues at the local, state and national levels.

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