



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs

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Community Grants Seek to Shape N.C. Policies On Healthy Living

RALEIGH — Eleven municipalities in North Carolina have been awarded grants to promote active lifestyles in their communities and influence state policy as it relates to physical activity and health. The grants were awarded by the N.C. Division of Public Health's Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch as part of its Built Environment Policy Initiative Grants Program.

Municipalities receiving funds include: the City of Eden, the City of Gastonia, the City of Lumberton, the City of Wilmington, the Town of Ahoskie, the Town of Banner Elk, the Town of Carrboro, the Town of Midland, the Town of Mount Gilead, the Town of Sparta and the Town of Waxhaw. Funded communities will serve as trailblazers in informing state level policy on physical activity and the built environment (bike lanes, greenways, pedestrian crossings, sidewalks, trails, playgrounds etc).

"North Carolina is the 10th most overweight and obese state in the nation," State Health Director Jeff Engel said. "If we are going to improve the health of our citizens, we must look to innovative partners at the municipal level to help us think in new ways about policy and health."

Funding for this initiative comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) award to North Carolina. Communities selected will receive up to \$24,999 as well as technical assistance and access to multiple training events to improve their knowledge and skills in health, policy, advocacy and media. Funds will be awarded over the next 15 months.

The grant awards are part of North Carolina's public health response to the national obesity epidemic. A Centers for Disease Control report issued Tuesday calls for urgent action against this growing problem.. The report shows that nine states had an obesity rate of 30 percent or higher in 2009; in 2005, only three states had numbers over 30 percent. In North Carolina, more than 29 percent of North Carolina adults consider themselves obese.

"Obesity is a problem that requires both personal and community action," Engel said. "People in all communities should be able to make healthy choices. That means creating communities that strongly support healthy eating and active living."

Selected communities will help to identify key policy barriers and gaps based upon their experience with policy in the overlapping areas of transportation, environment, commerce and health. The work of the communities will help form an action plan to improve policies within North Carolina government that promote healthy environments and active lifestyles in North Carolina communities.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has funded the Built Environment Policy Initiative Grants Program as part of the "State Supplemental Funding for Healthy Communities, Tobacco Control, Diabetes Prevention and Control, and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System."

Work to be completed by these communities supports Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina, a statewide movement that promotes healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play and pray. To learn more about the movement, visit www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.

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