



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2006

Media Contacts:

Janet Fritz
Metro Denver EDC
303.620.8039

Kristy Bassuener
Webb PR
303.796.8888

Metro Denver Debuts Health and Wellness Commission *Region Endeavors To Become America's Healthiest*

DENVER – In an endeavor to make Metro Denver America's healthiest community, a group of healthcare, government and business leaders today will launch the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission (MDHWC). The Commission's first charge will be drafting a strategic plan to transform Metro Denver into the nation's leader for healthy lifestyles.

The MDHWC's inaugural meeting will be hosted by the Denver Athletic Club. Commission co-chairs are Broomfield Mayor Karen Stuart, Co-Vice Chair of the Metro Mayors Caucus, Dr. James Hill, Director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center, and Tom Clark, Executive Vice President of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (Metro Denver EDC).

"The Commission will reach out across all sectors to emphasize the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle, and to promote Metro Denver nationally as a fit and healthy community," said Dr. James Hill of the Center for Human Nutrition. "Coloradans are energetic and healthy, but our state has not been immune to the rise in obesity and healthcare costs. Our proactive effort seeks collaborative and effective solutions."

Several organizations collaborated to establish the Commission, including the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center's Center for Human Nutrition, the Metro Mayors Caucus, Metro Denver EDC and America on the Move.

Early funding for the initiative comes from a \$40,000 grant from The Colorado Trust, along with support from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Physical Activity & Nutrition Program. The Commission is comprised of key stakeholders and leaders from Metro Denver healthcare providers and academic, business, government, philanthropic and other non-profit organizations.

*Metro Denver
Health & Wellness Commission
Co-Chairs:*

*Dr. James Hill,
Director, Center for Human Nutrition*

*Tom Clark
Executive Vice President, Metro Denver
Economic Development Corporation*

*Karen Stuart
Mayor, City & County of Broomfield*

Sponsors:

*Metro Denver Economic Development
Corporation*

Center for Human Nutrition

Metro Mayors Caucus

*Denver Metro Convention and Visitors
Bureau*

Well Nourished Worldwide

Civic Results

The MDHWC aims to accomplish the following objectives:

- To develop strategies for Metro Denver schools, employers, and communities, resulting in measurable obesity-rate declines and a drop in related diseases;
- To identify and quantify the impact of rising health care costs on our regional economy and the economic benefit of decreasing these costs at the regional level;
- To strengthen and expand the region's economic development cluster of health and wellness related services and industry;
- To develop community outreach programs and messages regarding the importance of healthy eating and active living, and promote Metro Denver nationally as the leader in health and wellness; and finally
- To grow the MDHWC to include additional partners that recognize the importance of health and wellness in our region and who can help to promote the programs and activities of the MDHWC.

"Coloradans' health is no longer just a medical issue, but also one with cultural and economic ramifications," said Tom Clark of Metro Denver EDC. "Site selectors increasingly request obesity data along with local tax rate and incentive information. The Commission seeks to give Metro Denver a clear advantage by offering the nation's healthiest workforce."

MDHWC will also create a State-of-the-Region health report to identify health trends and highlight wellness efforts in the region, as well as an Index of Key Metrics to measure regional performance in a variety of areas related to health and wellness.

"This Commission will encourage individuals, families and communities to take the steps that ensure Colorado and metro Denver remain the health and wellness capital of the United States," said Broomfield Mayor Karen Stuart.

The debut of the MDHWC will also be marked by a reception, sponsored by Centura Health, at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science on June 29. The evening will include remarks by commission co-chairs and Centura President and CEO Gregory Burfitt.

About the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission:

The Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission (MDHWC) is a collaborative endeavor of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center, the Metro Mayors Caucus, the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation and America on the Move. Early support for the Commission, staffed by Denver-based Civic Results, has been provided by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and The Colorado Trust. The MDHWC is comprised of key stakeholders and leaders from Metro Denver healthcare providers and academic, business, government, philanthropic and other non-profit organizations. The Commission's first charge will be drafting a strategic plan to transform Metro Denver into "America's Healthiest Community."