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More Than 30 Metro-Area Mayors Sign On To Shape Healthier Communities

City leaders each adopt six initiatives from a menu of healthy eating and active living options

DENVER – Despite recent headlines announcing that Colorado ranks lowest in the nation for obesity rates, the state's populace continues to tip the scales at a rising rate. The Metro Denver Health & Wellness Commission (MDHWC) and members of the Metro Mayors Caucus (Caucus) are taking strides to reverse this trend at the city-level, in order to achieve the shared goal of making the metro Denver region "America's healthiest community".

Today, 27 of the mayors gathered to assign the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that commits their municipalities to implementing a minimum of six programs, policies or environmental changes to support healthy eating and active living in their respective communities.

"Municipalities are essential to achieving the vision of a healthy and active populace across the metro region," said Lieutenant Governor Barbara O'Brien, MDHWC Chair. "By identifying six or more strategies that are best-suited to their unique communities, each mayor and his or her city council have declared their commitment to support healthy lifestyle choices and promote citizens' well-being both on the home-front, and on a regional scale."

MDHWC reached out to the Caucus' 38 members in June 2008, asking each mayor to consider implementing any six of more than 30 voluntary options listed in the MOU (available at www.mdhwc.org), such as co-sponsoring fitness events, publicizing health and wellness resources and programs, providing access to smoking cessation programs, incorporating pedestrian and cyclist access in master planning, or conducting needs assessments on access to healthy foods. MDHWC will begin to build a database to gauge the outcome of each community's efforts, identifying best practices that may be shared among its member communities.

"A healthy citizenry depends not only on individual choices, but also on community design, land use choices, employers' programming, school curriculum and product availability to offer access healthy food and safe recreation," said Tom Clark, co-chair of MDHWC and executive vice president of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation. "The Commission is pleased to partner the Metro Mayors Caucus and to have the opportunity to bring new ideas and best practices to the table for their consideration."

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This MOU on health and wellness is one of many such memoranda of understanding, intergovernmental agreements and “best practices” papers that have been initiated and adopted by the Metro Mayors Caucus on regional issues, such as growth management, water conservation and stewardship, energy and transportation.

“Adopting an MOU on health and wellness is a natural outgrowth of the Caucus’ work to find creative solutions on some of the most challenging issues in our region,” said Randy Pye, chair of the Caucus and mayor of the City of Centennial. “The metro region can achieve a measurable decline in its rate of obesity and obesity-related diseases if every community makes a few changes to help the public get moving and eating right.”

The following communities signed the MOU and committed to adopting six or more policies and programs on health and wellness:

Arvada	Centennial	Foxfield	Longmont
Aurora	Cherry Hills Village	Frederick	Louisville
Bennett	Commerce City	Glendale	Northglenn
Boulder	Denver	Golden	Parker
Bow Mar	Edgewater	Greenwood Village	Sheridan
Broomfield	Englewood	Lafayette	Superior
Castle Pines North	Erie	Lakewood	Thornton
Castle Rock	Firestone	Lone Tree	Wheat Ridge

About the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission:

The MDHWC is comprised of nearly 80 key leaders from Metro Denver academic, business, government, public health, health care, non-profit and philanthropic organizations. The Commission’s vision is to make Metro Denver “America’s Healthiest Community,” with a focus on promoting programs and policies that support a culture of healthy eating and active living in schools, worksites, and communities and promote our economic wellbeing. For more information, please visit www.mdhwc.org.

About The Metro Mayors Caucus

Founded by mayors in 1993, the Caucus is a cooperative alliance of mayors of 38 cities and towns in the Denver metropolitan region. It has emerged as a voice for collective action on issues that affect our entire metropolitan area and cannot be effectively addressed by any one jurisdiction acting alone. Among the issues the Caucus has tackled are growth management, multi-modal transportation, affordable housing, regional response to emergencies, and intergovernmental cooperation. For more information, please visit www.metromayors.org.

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