

# Creating a Healthier Tennessee: The University of Tennessee's High Obesity Program



## University Partnership

CDC's High Obesity Program (HOP) promotes healthy eating and active living in counties that have more than 40% prevalence of adult obesity. CDC provides funds to universities that work with communities—mostly in rural areas—whose residents may have less access to healthy foods and fewer opportunities to be physically active.

The University of Tennessee Extension Service works with four county Extensions and their partners to:

- Educate children in schools on the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating.
- Increase access to healthier food options in local retail outlets, corner stores, and restaurants.
- Create and enhance safe places for physical activity by working with state transportation officials.

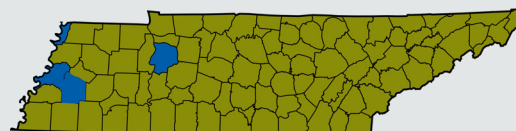
## Tennessee by the Numbers\*

Tennessee HOP counties include: Haywood, Humphreys, Lake, and Lauderdale.

In these counties:

- The estimated adult obesity prevalence ranges from 40.5% to 42.5%, well above the state adult obesity prevalence of 31.1%.
- The percentage of adults that report "reasonable" access to physical activity ranges from 8–52%.
- The percentage of children enrolled in public school eligible for free and reduced lunch ranges from 49.8% to 78.4%.

\*These data were obtained at the time of funding.



## Programs in Action

- In Humphreys County, many teachers are transforming their classrooms into active learning environments to promote physical activity. In afterschool programs, students are tracking their walking mileage with a map of the U.S. to show their progress.
- The Haywood County Extension—in partnership with the health department, local health council, and several fitness gyms around town—launched the Down 5 fitness challenge to encourage residents to lose 5% of their body weight. The 12-week program includes free fitness classes and pre- and post-body and weight measurements. To date, every challenge participant met the 5% weight loss goal.
- The Gates community in Lauderdale County partnered with the Tennessee Department of Transportation to redo their main intersection, adding cross-walks across the street, as well as signs and pavement markings for shared bike lanes.



## Voice from the Community

*"One thing to note about our community is that we are diverse. There are so many different people with so many different stories and needs. And we have a diverse program that meets all of those diverse needs. I think the most important thing for our county—and to continue this success—is to just meet people where they are and keep changing as we need to meet the needs of our population."*

– Tennille Short, Haywood County Extension Agent