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NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA CELEBRATES 2017 HEALTHY WEIGHT COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

850-245-4111

Gainesville, Fla.—Today, the Florida Department of Health recognized 98 communities as the 2017 Healthy Weight Community Champions. Florida’s county and municipal governments play an important role in decreasing the prevalence of unhealthy weight in their jurisdictions. Local governments can implement a variety of policies that have been shown to increase physical activity and improve nutrition. These best practice policies are reflected in the Healthy Weight Community Champion submission criteria. Between August and December 2016, local governments were invited to submit best practice policies they have implemented in their jurisdictions.

The Community Champions program is part of the department’s Healthiest Weight Florida initiative. Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, local governments, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, schools, faith-based organizations and entire communities to help Florida’s children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living.

Local Community Champions and their program highlights are below.

Alachua County

Alachua County’s Comprehensive Plan includes a health element that address access to physical activity and nutritious food. The county has sidewalk/bicycling projects underway for completing segments near Wiles Elementary and Kanapaha Middle Schools and has recently adopted new regulations allowing mobile fresh food markets to operate on mixed use and nonresidential properties.

City of Newberry

The city of Newberry’s park system includes seven parks managed and maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. All the parks provide some type of active facilities, such as playground equipment and ball fields. A multitude of youth sports and activities continue to be provided; and this year, in response to requests for more adult

sporting opportunities, adult leagues are now offered for basketball, softball, kickball, wiffleball and cornhole.

About Healthiest Weight Florida

To learn more about Healthiest Weight Florida, please visit www.HealthiestWeightFL.com. A list of the 2017 Champion Communities and best practices can be found online at: www.HealthiestWeightFL.com/Recognition.html.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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