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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Haslam Designates Nine Healthier Tennessee Communities**

*Recognition event part of Healthier Tennessee Week events across the state*

**NASHVILLE** – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam and Governor’s Foundation for Health and Wellness CEO Richard Johnson today designated nine communities as Healthier Tennessee Communities. The recognition honors Bradley, Dickson, Macon, Maury, Rhea and Wilson counties, and the cities of Cookeville, Clarksville and Collegedale for their work to improve the health of their citizens.

The designations were awarded at a breakfast ceremony to mark Healthier Tennessee Week and kick off Healthier Tennessee Day on the Hill.

“We must encourage and enable community-led efforts like the ones we’re celebrating today if we want to improve the health and quality of life of Tennesseans,” Haslam said. “I congratulate these communities on their efforts to improve the health of their citizens, and I hope more communities will strive to do the same.”

The Healthier Tennessee Communities initiative takes a local approach to improving Tennesseans’ health by engaging citizens and local leaders in cities, towns, counties and neighborhoods across the state.

To be designated, the communities established wellness councils and developed sustainable community-wide events and activities that support physical activity, healthy eating and tobacco abstinence. They then tracked and measured outputs and accomplishments of the programs.

“These communities have elevated the importance of health and wellness and are working to make it an integral part of life in their cities and counties,” Johnson said. “If we can continue to do this, community by community, we will make this a healthier Tennessee.”

In Tennessee, one in five adults smokes, and one in five high school students uses tobacco. Approximately 34 percent of the population is classified as obese, and type-2 diabetes and high blood pressure are at near epidemic levels.

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The Foundation launched the Healthier Tennessee Communities initiative in March 2015 with nine pilot communities. Today, 78 communities are engaged with the program and 15 have already received the designation.

More information about the communities program, including a list of participating cities and counties, and other Healthier Tennessee initiatives is available at [www.healthierTN.com](http://www.healthierTN.com).

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### **About the Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness**

The Governor's Foundation for Health and Wellness is a non-profit corporation dedicated to enabling and encouraging Tennesseans to lead healthier lives. Based in Nashville, the Foundation brings together a statewide coalition of employers, health insurers, hospital systems, local governments, school systems and healthcare-focused foundations and community organizations to effect positive, measurable change. The Foundation's Healthier Tennessee initiative strives to increase the number of Tennesseans who are physically active for at least 30 minutes five times a week, promote a healthy diet, and reduce the number of people who use tobacco.