



BLUEPRINT

A COMMUNITY'S **move•ment**
TOWARD HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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Communities across the nation are facing a growing prevalence of overweight and obesity and associated preventable chronic diseases as a result of unhealthy lifestyles. In particular, excess weight increases the risk of many diseases and conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, and some cancers. Both communities and individuals bear the costs. Direct medical costs of obesity are estimated at \$147 billion nationwide; on average, health care expenses cost an extra \$1,400 a year for an obese individual.

The solution cannot be found through health care procedures alone because obesity is difficult and expensive to treat. What is necessary, however, is prevention through systemic changes that will be made via policy, environmental and ultimately culture and behavior change.

Our community manifests a similar pattern to many others – 37% of our population in the Tri-State is obese and 29% is overweight. Beyond health care costs, the implications range from loss of productivity to overall lower quality of life for area residents.

To address the need for community change, the Welborn Baptist Foundation has spearheaded **move·ment**, a healthy community initiative. The Foundation envisions a coalition of multiple, engaged partners, leading an effort aimed at increasing physical activity and healthy eating. The Foundation has committed to hiring a full time staff person as well as funding resources for capacity building and social marketing messaging.

In 2008 the Foundation convened an Advisory Committee charged with assisting in the development of a long term strategy to bring lasting change to our community. Local leaders in health care, education, business, and not-for-profits were brought together and asked to review best practices as they prioritized areas to be targeted in the first phase of the **move·ment** Initiative. Next, smaller subcommittees consisting of professionals across disciplines helped guide the strategy development for each of the priority areas. In the pages that follow is the resulting *Blueprint: A Community's move·ment Toward Healthy Lifestyles*.

The blueprint provides a framework to begin addressing healthy lifestyles by offering six priority areas, an objective for each, strategies, and potential actions. Although there are other issues that could be addressed, this document serves as a starting point for years of work to come.

The **move·ment** priority area statements include:

- **Built Environment**
Safe neighborhoods, complete streets, good urban design, and open space support physical activity as part of everyday life for all ages.
- **Food Access**
Healthy, fresh, and locally grown food is available, affordable and accessed throughout the community.
- **Child Care and School-Age Settings**
Child care and school-age organizations promote healthy foods and beverages as well as physical activities and incorporate them throughout the day (including before and after school).
- **Worksite**
Workplaces and employers offer and promote opportunities for improving health status with an emphasis on healthy eating and physical activity.
- **Organizations, Institutions, and Individuals with Influence**
Organizations, institutions, and individuals with influence will model and promote healthy eating and physical activity.
- **Faith-Based Community**
The faith-based community will promote the message of healthy living by proclaiming the body as a spiritual gift from God to be used in His service.

With this document in place, the implementation phase of this effort can now begin. Within the initial twelve months, activities such as needs assessment and asset inventory, first action steps, “quick win” projects, community awareness and engagement, and evaluation planning will occur in each priority area. Although full implementation will take decades, focused effort by all segments of the community will produce significant progress.