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CHICAGO RECOGNIZED NATIONALLY FOR EFFORTS TO REDUCE CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND ITS ROLE IN *LET'S MOVE!* CITIES, TOWNS AND COUNTRIES

Today, the National League of Cities (NLC) recognized the City of Chicago for its accomplishments in reducing childhood obesity and its outstanding efforts to complete health and wellness goals for *Let's Move!* Cities, Towns and Counties (LMCTC).

"Our goal is to ensure that Chicagoans, both children and adults, have the knowledge, tools and the access they need to get and stay healthy," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "I've taken steps to make sure students have healthy options in schools and learn healthy habits that will help them succeed; increased access to fresh food in our neighborhoods; and set standards for vending machines across the city. It's an honor to be recognized for these efforts."

Chicago was recognized and commended for achievements in 4 out of the possible 5 goal areas:

- *Start Early, Start Smart:* Promoting best practices for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time in early care and education settings.
- *Smart Servings for Students:* Increasing participation in school breakfast and lunch programs.
- *Model Food Service:* Implementing healthy and sustainable food service guidelines that are aligned with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- *Active Kids at Play:* Increasing opportunities for physical activity.

"Healthy environments are crucial to healthy people. We can help combat a variety of health problems, including obesity, by prioritizing wellness through a variety of programs and initiatives across our city," said Bechara Choucair, M.D, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH). "Improving access to healthy foods, open spaces and information on how to live well helps individuals make the choices that keep them healthy."

"Today, we celebrate communities across America that tackled childhood obesity with great commitment as part of *Let's Move!* Cities, Towns, and Counties," said Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH, Assistant Secretary of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Healthier communities can improve quality of life for all."

Chicago's comprehensive efforts to improve the health and wellness of children and adults across the city include:

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- In 2011, Chicago introduced a comprehensive five-year public health plan called “Healthy Chicago.” The plan lays out over 120 strategies in 12 priority areas with the vision to make Chicago the healthiest city in the nation.
- Just a few months ago, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) set new guidelines for its Local School Wellness Policy and expanded its Healthy CPS initiative with a new Healthy Snack and Beverage Policy. Both policies set new standards for health in schools, including nutrition guidelines for all food sold in schools.
- This month, the Mayor introduced an ordinance that set standards for healthy vending across all City departments and buildings. These new vending machines will ensure that City employees and the visiting public are provided with predominantly healthy snack and beverage options from vending machines in these buildings.
- Chicago Lives Healthy, the nation’s largest municipal wellness program, launched this year and has more than 38,000 registrants.
- The City now has 100 percent healthy vending in parks and schools and numerous programs to combat obesity in our neighborhoods.
- In October, the City launched a new program in conjunction with the Chicago Park District that will have returning veterans leading fitness courses in the city’s neighborhoods.

LMCTC calls upon local elected officials to adopt sustainable and holistic policies that improve communities’ access to healthy affordable food and opportunities for physical activity. LMCTC is a major component of First Lady Michelle Obama’s comprehensive *Let’s Move!* Initiative, which is dedicated to solving the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.

NLC is dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities. Working in partnership with the 49 state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a resource to and an advocate for the more than 19,000 cities, villages and towns it represents.

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