

## Leaders work to heal Oklahoma's status

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### *12th annual Turning Point winter conference*

Cost to attend the conference is \$50 at the door. For more information, go to [www.okturningpoint.org](http://www.okturningpoint.org).

[EDMOND](#) — Community leaders are working to turn around Oklahoma's dismal health status with projects such as walking trails, community health centers and teen pregnancy prevention.

Community advocates will gather at the 12th annual Turning Point winter conference Thursday at the [University of Central Oklahoma](#).

The conference will start at 8:30 a.m. in the [Nigh University](#) Center.

"We are gaining ground and seeing more emphasis on improving Oklahoma's health," said [Larry Olmstead](#), director of the [Oklahoma](#) Turning Point Initiative. "That's the only way it's going to get done. It has to be done by local communities big and small."

The annual conference brings together people from across the state to share their experiences and goals to make their communities healthier.

Topics include drug dependency, obesity, tobacco control and adolescent health.

Sessions on teen pregnancy will guide communities to reach out to parents, youth, schools and congregations to advocate prevention, said [Sharon Rodine](#) of the [Oklahoma Institute for Child](#) Advocacy.

"Oklahoma continues to have one of the highest, meaning worst, teen birth rates in the country, which we've had for decades," Rodine said. "Twice as many teen girls are giving birth every year as we have freshmen girls entering the [University of Oklahoma](#) and [Oklahoma State University](#), which is staggering. We can do a lot better in this state on this issue. Teen pregnancy is 100 percent preventable."

In addition, the [Oklahoma Fit Kids Coalition](#) will present awards to officials, schools, leaders and organizations that work to improve the health and well-being of Oklahoma children and youth. The Oklahoma Certified Healthy Business program will recognize businesses that provide health and wellness opportunities for their employees.