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## Crunch time for healthy sigh-up

Changing how people think about their healthy continues to be at the center of a campaign meant to get people signed up and thinking about better lifestyles.

It's called the Certified Healthy Oklahoma program as only a few days remain for a long list of groups to take just a few minutes to go online and apply for the certification.

Continuing to lead the fight for better health are officials with the Garvin County Health Department and Allies for Better Living, a group formerly known as the county's health coalition.

For Jennifer Samford it's kind of a dual mission as she volunteers with the Allies group and works as Pauls Valley's recreation director with her office located at the local Reynolds Recreation Center.

"We are trying to change the mindset. As a state, as a whole, we don't rank as high compared to other states," Samford said about healthier choices and today's health statistics.

"This is a way for the different entities to help change the way people are thinking about health. This can lead to policy change. This is a way for change in the health of our Oklahoma.

"It's going to take a lot of people to make an impact on Oklahoma's health. We all need to have a part in it."

The entities referred to by Samford include businesses and restaurants, schools, churches, early childhood programs and even full communities.

The certified healthy process is meant to get Oklahoma residents thinking about ways to be more healthy in their lives.

For that process it's crunch time as Nov. 1 represents the deadline to go online and get signed up for certification consideration this year.

Samford reminds the public it's an easy process as all folks have to do is go to the Certified Healthy Oklahoma website, [certifiedhealthyok.com](http://certifiedhealthyok.com), online and fill out the application.

"It's super easy," she said. "Just fill it out and hit send."

Another reminder—even those places already approved need to reapply for the certification every year.

In a couple of cases getting certified can also mean grant monies meant to help promote healthier lifestyles on a larger scale.

"If a city or school is certified there are dollars involved. They can apply for money, but they've got to apply first."

Although there's no grants at stake for any one else applying, Samford says there are benefits.

For example, businesses looking to get certified can go tobacco free, offer insurance to their employees, promote things like blood drives and in some cases offer healthy snacks.

“For congregations, businesses, early childhood centers, there’s no financial incentive, but if we want to be a healthy Oklahoma we have to change the way we think about things like health,” she said.

“Maybe it’s a sense of pride or you can advertise that you’re a certified healthy business.

“The return is we’re going to have healthier lifestyles.”