

## **Cleveland County Receives Communities of Excellence in Nutrition and Fitness Grant from State's Tobacco Fund**

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NORMAN - Over the next five years, the people of Cleveland County can expect to see environmental changes such as more trails for walking and bicycling, more recreation areas, greater access to fresh produce and more.

Cleveland County's Turning Point Coalition - lead by Norman Regional Health System - has received the first year grant of \$90,000 as part of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust's (TSET) Communities of Excellence in Nutrition and Fitness program. Cleveland County along with 20 other counties in the state will soon begin creating and implementing new programs that will promote healthy food and physical activity.

"Turning Point is excited to be one of the 15 grants funded in the state for this new program," said Sharon Howard, coalition spokesperson. "We are ready to work together with individuals and community partners to make nutrition and fitness a priority."

According to America's Health Rankings, Oklahoma is ranked as the 46th least healthy state in the nation. In Cleveland County statistics show 84 percent of adults do not eat the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Amber Cole, grant writer for the Norman Regional Health Foundation wrote the grant that was awarded to the county.

"We have a very motivated community that has been waiting for an opportunity like this for years," Cole said. "The Norman Regional Health Foundation, Cleveland County Turning Point, and their affiliates are hard-working and visionary. They have already come up with lots of ideas to make our community a healthier place to live and work."

The grant money will come from the state's Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust fund. Since TSET's Tobacco Control program was implemented in Cleveland County, tobacco use rates have dropped well below the state's average of 25.8 percent and as low as 14 percent in Moore and 18.7 percent in Norman.

"Through this new and related program, we aspire to make a similar impact on Cleveland County's obesity and physical activity rates," Cole said.

The Communities of Excellence in Nutrition and Fitness program funds community-based coalitions to work with schools, communities, workplaces and businesses to implement effective policies and programs that promote opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. The grants will begin with a 15 month start-up/planning period. Funding in future implementation years will see an increase in funds awarded to coalitions based on population and strategic plans. Over the five-year granting cycle, grantees will be encouraged to creatively and innovatively implement promising and best practices, strategies and interventions within communities based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Institute of Medicine and other scientific sources, that have promise or have proven to increase healthy eating and physical activity.

The ultimate goal is an eventual reduction in Oklahoma's increasing obesity rates, and the resulting physical and financial toll on individuals, communities, and the State of Oklahoma.

### **ABOUT THE OKLAHOMA TOBACCO SETTLEMENT ENDOWMENT TRUST**

*The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) serves as a partner and bridge builder for organizations working towards shaping a healthier future for all Oklahomans. TSET provides leadership at the intersections of health by working with local coalitions and initiatives across the state, by cultivating innovative and life-changing research, and by working across public and private sectors to develop, support, implement and evaluate creative strategies to take advantage of emerging opportunities to improve the public's health. TSET – Better Lives Through Better Health. For additional information please visit <http://www.ok.gov/tset/>*