

## Healthy Conversations – Sept. 2018

### How is your hometown impacting your health?

It's no secret maintaining a healthy lifestyle can be challenging. And while genetics play a factor in overall health, where you live may have an even bigger impact on your well-being.

Think about your hometown. How easy is it to incorporate healthy choices into your daily routine? Is processed food easier to fit into your hectic schedule than a healthy, home cooked meal? How often are you on your phone or tablet? Do you drive to the store rather than walk? Our day-to-day activities and where we live impact our overall health. In nearly 30 years, obesity among adults has increased more than 20 percent. This means that 2 out of 3 of us are obese. We have to start making healthy choices easier.

A new initiative, Healthy Hometown<sup>SM</sup> Powered by Wellmark, is aiming to change that. Healthy Hometown uses proven strategies and techniques that help make the healthy choice the easy choice. At no cost, Healthy Hometown experts work with communities to identify ways to make positive and lasting changes that enhance community well-being.

Healthy Hometown has three areas of focus: Eat Well, Move More and Feel Better. But, what does that mean for your community?

- **Eat well.** Since 1960, dinner plate sizes have increased by 36 percent, and Americans are filling their plates with unhealthy and processed foods, rather than healthy options. Providing healthy vending and concession options throughout the community, planting community or school gardens and encouraging non-food fundraisers are a couple ways communities can help their residents have more access to healthy foods.
- **Move more.** It's estimated that by 2030, one in eight Iowans and South Dakotans will be diabetic, 1 in 4 will be hypertensive and 1 in 4 will have heart disease. Communities can help combat this trend by improving walkability and bikeability, incorporating physical activity breaks for school children and identifying safe walking routes for residents.
- **Feel better.** Towns thrive when its members are connected and passionate about their community's well-being. Communities can help residents feel better and make lasting, meaningful connections by creating volunteer opportunities, starting a wellness committee or even establishing nicotine-free areas.

Healthy Hometown is a way to make your community an even better place to live, work and play. Ready to learn more? Visit [Wellmark.com/HealthyHometown](http://Wellmark.com/HealthyHometown) to watch the video and get started on your community health improvement journey.