

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MAINE DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION AWARDED \$1.6 MILLION TO LAUNCH *HEALTHY MAINE STREETS*

**Augusta, Maine:** The Maine Development Foundation, specifically its Maine Downtown Center, in collaboration with MCD Public Health, announced today it has been awarded a grant of \$1.641 million to launch *Healthy Maine Streets*, a program to support health and wellness in Maine's small communities. This grant is a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Community Transformation Grants (CTG) to support public health efforts to reduce chronic diseases, promote healthier lifestyles, reduce health disparities, and control health care spending in small communities.

*Healthy Maine Streets* will build on MDC's well-established downtown revitalization framework of Main Street Maine organizations and Maine Downtown Network programs to leverage community health improvements in a number of mostly rural towns, with a combined population of 180,000. Through *Healthy Maine Streets*, local Wellness Councils will be established to address disparate health access and outcomes for employees of small businesses, which are the heart and soul of small town Main Streets. These downtown organizations are woven into the fabric of the community, and improvements will be felt by employees, their families, customers, and the community.

Overall, HHS awarded approximately \$70 million in prevention grants to 40 awardees focused on improving the health of small communities across the nation. Administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the CTG Program is a comprehensive prevention and wellness initiative launched in 2011 and funded through the Affordable Care Act's Prevention and Public Health Fund. By focusing on where people live, work, learn, and play, the CTG program is expected to improve the health of more than four out of 10 U.S. citizens – about 130 million Americans. These new funds will support areas with fewer than 500,000 people in neighborhoods, school districts, villages, towns, cities, and countries. Awardees represent organizations committed to improving health from a multitude of sectors.

The Community Transformation Grant will bring communities and small businesses together to create a wellness program in the heart of Maine's downtowns that is shared by small businesses and eventually reshapes our communities into more healthy, vibrant places to work and live. The program addresses the critical need to improve health and wellness in Maine

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communities and the high cost of health care for small businesses. “This new program will help create healthier, more productive communities and is a value added service for Main Street Maine and Maine Downtown Network communities,” stated Roxanne Eflin, MDC Senior Program Director.

Support from the business community, school districts, community-based organizations, and other non-traditional partners is critical to reducing deaths and health costs due to heart attacks, strokes, cancer, diabetes, and other serious health problems. Small businesses may be eligible for Health Insurance Rebates and State of Maine tax credit and to be an employer of choice improving employee retention and recruitment.

Awardees will conduct activities in one or more areas that contribute to the overall goals of the CTG program and help achieve positive changes in one or more of the following outcome measures: 1) weight, 2) proper nutrition, 3) physical activity, 4) tobacco use, and 5) social and emotional well-being.

“MCD Public Health is proud and pleased to be collaborating with the Maine Development Foundation on the *Healthy Maine Streets* project. Like MDF, we have a long history of working to support communities in Maine. MCDPH brings expertise in population health and wellness, including innovative leadership, to this new opportunity for Maine downtowns. MCDPH and MDF share a heartfelt mission to improve the quality of life in Maine. Through *Healthy Maine Streets*, downtown leaders will demonstrate that by helping themselves and their communities *be well*, downtowns also *do well*,” said Kate Perkins, Director, MCD Public Health.

The Community Transformation Grants are one piece of a broader effort by the Obama Administration to address the health and well-being of U.S. communities through initiatives such as the President’s Childhood Obesity Task Force, the First Lady’s *Let’s Move!* Campaign, the National Prevention Strategy, the National Quality Strategy, and HHS’ Million Hearts™ initiative. The Prevention and Public Health Fund, as part of the Affordable Care Act, is supporting the CTG program and other initiatives designed to expand and sustain the necessary capacity to prevent chronic diseases, detect them early, manage conditions, before they become severe, and provide states and communities the resources they need to promote healthy living. ###

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#### **THE HEALTHY MAINE STREETS PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS MISSION STATEMENTS**

The **Maine Development Foundation (MDF)** drives sustainable, long-term economic growth for Maine. MDF stimulates new ideas, develops leaders, and provides common ground for solving problems and advancing issues. The Maine Downtown Center serves as the state coordinator for the National Main Street Center. The Center’s mission is to advance preservation-based economic development in downtowns across Maine. Visit [www.mdf.org](http://www.mdf.org) for information.

With a mission to improve the health and well-being of people everywhere, **MCD Public Health** works in partnership with communities, organizations, and government agencies to create compassionate and impactful health programs, provide technical assistance, and foster a community of innovation and collaboration. Visit [www.mcdph.org](http://www.mcdph.org) for information.