**Oakland County Physician Brings Lifestyle Changes to Michigan Communities**

September 2018-Royal Oak, Michigan- - Family Physician, Paul R. Ehrmann, DO is on a mission to improve the health status of residents in communities across the state through an initiative he developed a few years ago and continues to spread across the southeast Michigan region.

“The three cornerstones of good health starts with improved nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle behavior,” Ehrmann says, who has been a doctor for nearly 40 years. “Nutrition is a great place to start. If we can teach people how to eat right … that really puts them in a very good position to stay healthy and encourages them to move on to other healthy activities and behavior.”

Ehrmann’s program, HealthyTown Everywhere, is a community-based health and wellness initiative, founded by him in 2014, and focuses on optimizing health by working toward achieving healthy weight by improving nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle behavior education in individuals, families and communities.

The program was initially piloted in Royal Oak with success and recently expanded its outreach efforts to Genesee County in Flint, Michigan with an event on August 18 with the voluntary help of students, physicians and registered dieticians from five different universities and health systems, including Ascension/Genesys, Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Central Michigan University, Oakland University/William Beaumont Hospital School of Medicine, and Wayne State University.

Nicole LeClair, a third year medical student from Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine student and Flint native, sees events like HealthyTown Everywhere as a way to give back to her community and plans to remain in the area to practice medicine.

“I was born and raised in Flint. There are not enough doctors here. I decided to stay to help the people in my community,” LeClair says.

The HealthyTown Everywhere event included a fun walk with the help of *walkwithadoc.org,* grocery tours run by registered and student dieticians, a health fair led medical students that offered screenings for blood sugar, blood pressure, and Body Mass Index (BMI), consultation services that were provided by physicians and registered dieticians, and a mini medical school a program which was offered through a partnership with the non profit Michigan Health Council that engages children in interactive health activities and encourages healthy lifestyle habits and promotes careers in health care.

The Flint event was made possible through a partnership with Hamady Brothers and coincided with the grand opening of the first Hamady Complete Food Store in 25 years. Ehrmann says the store’s opening is a significant step in improving access and availability of fresh fruit, vegetables and other whole foods in the northwest Flint community, where limited access to nutritious and affordable food options has contributed to high rates of obesity often leading to an increased incidence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease.

Ehrmann says the mission of HealthyTown Everywhere is to have physicians both in training and in practice partner with allied health professionals to replicate, execute, and sustain a healthy living program in their own practice community that promotes a culture of wellness where we live, work, and play.

Ehrmann hopes that the Flint event, leads to continued efforts in the region. “In each community where we have introduced HealthyTown Everywhere, I like to think of our effort as a catalyst to getting residents to think about eating right, moving more, and living well.

“We recognize we need to sustain the message in order to have improved outcomes,” he says. “Our efforts serve as a start toward that effort building strong inter professional cooperative health teams on the way, delivering the best value to the people that we serve.”

Plans for HealthyTown Everywhere are to continue expanding the initiative throughout the state by identifying “champions” to lead the program within their own practice community. That includes working with local stakeholders to build models and tailoring the program to suit the needs of their respective communities.

“We want to expand our collective group effort; offering our services in order to jump-start the health of the communities we serve,” Ehrmann says.

To learn more about HealthyTown Everywhere, visit *healthytowneverywhere.org*

 **To set up an interview with Dr. Ehrmann, or for other editorial inquiries, phone:**

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