WEIGHT WATCHERS AND THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS NAME BALTIMORE, Md., RACINE, Wis. AND YORK, Pa. RECIPIENTS OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES GRANTS

New Grant Program to Help Cities Expand Efforts to Address Rising Obesity Rates and Jump-start Healthy Lifestyles in Low-Income Communities

LAS VEGAS—Weight Watchers International, Inc. and the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) today named three cities as recipients of Healthy Communities Grants. The Healthy Communities Grant Program is a new USCM and Weight Watchers initiative designed to help communities curb obesity by fostering healthy lifestyles. The three winning cities – Baltimore, Md.; Racine, Wis.; and York, Pa. – were recognized for their leadership in developing healthy lifestyle programs within their respective communities with a special focus on low-income areas. The Grant Program’s goal is to recognize and broaden innovative solutions to the obesity epidemic by galvanizing governments, businesses and community members to work together to foster healthier living environments.

“About a third of adults in the U.S. today are obese¹ and if we stay on this current trajectory, by 2030, that number will rise to almost half of U.S. men and women, across all 50 states²,” said David Kirchhoff, CEO, Weight Watchers International, Inc. “Weight Watchers commends the vote this week by the American Medical Association that supports a systematic, evidence-based approach to treating obesity. It’s long been established that it causes other chronic health conditions including heart disease and type 2 diabetes. To prevent obesity and costly obesity-related diseases, treatment must go beyond the commonly-heard advice to eat less and exercise more. We must act now with solutions that are proven to be supportive, effective, sustainable and deliverable in scalable way.”

The three awarded cities – one large, one medium and one small that were selected by an independent judging panel – will be recognized Monday, June 24 at the USCM 81st Annual Conference in Las Vegas. Each city will use this new grant to build upon its successful efforts to foster healthy eating, increase physical activity, and promote weight loss and weight management through access to partially subsidized Weight Watchers memberships for local residents who qualify based on health status and financial need. The total retail value of all Weight Watchers memberships offered as part of the grant is up to $1 million across the three cities. Each of the three cities will also receive a $25,000 grant to administer their new program and build capacity for its success.*

“Collaborating with the U.S. Conference of Mayors on this initiative is part of our commitment to work with public leaders to help combat obesity with community-based solutions,” said Kirchhoff. “We look forward to working with Baltimore, Racine and York to support their efforts by providing the Weight Watchers proven approach to weight loss to those who otherwise may not be able to afford our program.”
“The U.S. Conference of Mayors has long been committed to mayor-driven health promotion activities in communities nationwide,” said U.S. Conference of Mayors President and Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter. “We are proud to work with Weight Watchers on this important initiative to help cities support qualifying residents in achieving a healthier lifestyle. We commend Baltimore, Racine and York for their commitment to healthy living, and congratulate them on being selected as grant recipients.”

In recognizing the grant recipients at the annual meeting, Weight Watchers and USCM will showcase each recipient city’s innovative approach to health promotion in this USCM and Weight Watchers Healthy Communities Grant Program video. Brief descriptions of each city’s program and quotes from winning city Mayors are below:

**Baltimore, Md.** – Chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke are the leading cause of death and disability in Baltimore City. For this reason, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and the Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) have identified reduction of cardiovascular disease and obesity as key health priorities. Reducing obesity and improving heart health are amongst the priority areas in Healthy Baltimore 2015, the city’s health policy agenda. BCHD has undertaken numerous efforts to counter obesity, including providing access to healthy foods and safe opportunities for physical activity. One program--B’more Fit for Healthy Babies—is designed to help postpartum, low-income women lose weight after giving birth. Weight Watchers leaders host weekly Weight Watchers meetings, and local fitness experts from the YMCA of Central Maryland and Brick Bodies offer weekly exercise instruction to participants. Since the program’s implementation in February 2012, more than a fifth (21.6 percent) of the 278 participants has lost 10 percent of their body weight. The Healthy Communities Grant will allow the program to expand to serve more women in two high-need Baltimore neighborhoods and women and men, including seniors, in another area with high obesity rates.

“On behalf of our entire city, we couldn’t be more excited to win this award,” said Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “Our work with post-partum, low-income women helps mothers stay healthy and fit, and with this grant from Weight Watchers International and the Conference of Mayors, we’ll be able to expand our efforts and help even more Baltimore residents live longer, healthier lives.”

**Racine, Wis.** – Obesity rates are 6 percent higher for adults in Racine County than the national average, making chronic disease prevention a top priority for Racine. Mayor John Dickert has led by example by participating in “Beat the Boss” and other worksite wellness competitions to shed weight and increase activity. Mayor Dickert has convinced local business leaders to participate in the Well Racine initiative, a component of Well City USA. As a result, community businesses are successfully providing results-oriented wellness programs for nearly 16,000 employees. Through the Healthy Communities Grant, Racine hopes to expand its Well City Racine designation to a Well County Racine designation. To meet this goal, Well County Racine businesses will work with Weight Watchers to offer qualified residents steeply discounted Weight Watchers memberships. This effort will help Racine take its successful strategies for healthy eating, physical activity, weight loss and reduction of chronic illness to a new level.

“This is a true partnership between our local businesses and our staff,” said Racine Mayor John Dickert. “Working together not only make for a healthier and more productive city, but a stronger community. We are family, and we are just getting started to a healthier tomorrow.”

**York, Pa.** –Inspired by the First Lady’s Let’s Move program, Mayor C. Kim Bracey launched Let’s Move York City in September 2012 and set a goal for residents to shed 5,000 pounds and log 350,000 minutes of physical activity in a year. Let’s Move York City strives to foster healthy lifestyles supporting innovative
programs such as “Healthy Kids on the Move,” “Play Streets” and “Eat, Play, Breathe York.” One in three York residents lives below the poverty level, so the Healthy Communities Grant is designed to help parents who qualify, through body mass index and income-level criteria, gain access to partially subsidized Weight Watchers memberships. The goal is to give York adults knowledge and tools to reach a healthier weight so that they can, by example, teach their children healthy behaviors and how to be more active for life.

“With a third of our residents living below the poverty level, it’s critical that we provide low-cost solutions to help them stay healthy and fit,” said York Mayor C. Kim Bracey. “That’s a major motivation behind the development of Let’s Move York City. With the generous support of Weight Watchers International and the Conference of Mayors, we’ll be able to significantly expand our level of services, and make a real dent in our fight to reverse adult obesity trends in our city.”

More information on the Healthy Communities Grant Program and winners is available at usmayors.org/weightwatchers.

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About The United States Conference of Mayors
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About Weight Watchers International, Inc.
Weight Watchers International, Inc. is the world’s leading provider of weight management services, operating globally through a network of Company-owned and franchise operations. Weight Watchers holds more than 40,000 meetings each week where members receive group support and learn about healthy eating patterns, behavior modification and physical activity. WeightWatchers.com provides innovative, subscription weight management products over the Internet and is the leading Internet-based weight management provider in the world. In addition, Weight Watchers offers a wide range of products, publications and programs for those interested in weight loss and weight control.

*Award of grant and partially subsidized Weight Watchers memberships will be subject to eligibility and compliance with local, state and federal laws and regulations, including without limitation any applicable local gift ordinance. Void where prohibited.
