



## **National League of Cities: Culture of Health Spotlight**

### **Annapolis, Maryland**

*The City of Annapolis is best known as the capital of the state of Maryland and home to the U.S. Naval Academy. But this self-proclaimed small city, with a population of 38,722, has embarked on a journey to improve the health of all its residents. Building upon its work in Let's Move! Cities, Towns, and Counties (LMCTC), and grounded by strong multi-sector partnerships, the City of Annapolis is beginning to address other factors that influence health such as housing, education, and transportation to promote a Culture of Health.*

### **Exemplifying Success: Let's Move! Cities, Towns, and Counties**

Of the 522 municipalities engaged in the [Let's Move! Cities, Towns, and Counties \(LMCTC\)](#) initiative, few have been more successful at promoting healthy eating and active living than the City of Annapolis. The City achieved gold medal status in all 5 goal areas in July of 2014, less than 2 years after they first joined LMCTC. Their work includes the [Annapolis Mighty Milers](#) program, a six-week curriculum emphasizing proper running form and an [annual Youth Triathlon](#), which celebrated its 10 year anniversary last summer. It also includes other fitness-related programs like [STEP IT UP Kids](#) and *Every Body Fitness*, aimed at promoting physical activity among youth with disabilities. Moreover, Annapolis Recreation and Parks launched an initiative to provide healthy snack and drink choices in the vending machines that makes it easier to identify healthy options, [utilizing a color-coding system](#).

### **Partnerships Lead to Success**

City officials in Annapolis attribute their success in promoting health and wellness to well-established, multi-sector partnerships with community stakeholders. The presence of the U.S. Naval Academy as an anchor institution is an invaluable asset for the city, as the Midshipmen ("Mids") frequently partner with the city. Similarly, the City of Annapolis recently partnered with the University of Maryland to improve the safety and efficiency of its [bike-sharing program](#).

While the City has strong relationships with surrounding colleges and universities, other multi-sectoral partnerships also exist. The City received a \$5,000 grant from the Baltimore Ravens to help fund the Mighty Milers program, and secured additional sponsorships from local grocers and small businesses like Giant Food, Graul's Market, Charm City Run, Naval Bagels, Off-The-Hook Entertainment LLC, and Victory Awards. Additionally, the City works very closely with Anne Arundel County to access data related to health and education initiatives, and with local hospitals on public health initiatives like the [Obesity Prevention Sub-Committee](#).

### **Broadening the Scope: Promoting a Culture of Health**

While there is no question that the City of Annapolis has done great work in the field of healthy eating and active living, Mayor Michael Pantelides realizes that building healthy communities goes beyond childhood obesity.

“For some, a healthy lifestyle means going to a gym to work out and eating healthy. As Mayor, it is my job to ensure that all our residents have an opportunity to be healthy, no matter their financial situation,” Mayor Pantelides said.

Building upon their success as part of LMCTC, and understanding the connections between health and other social determinants, the City of Annapolis has developed several programs, policies, and practices related to improving the overall health of their residents:

**Transportation:** As part of their ongoing work with [LMCTC All-Stars](#), the City of Annapolis is improving its “Bicycle Friendly Community” rating, in addition to developing and implementing city design guidelines that encourage walking and other forms of physical activity. To accomplish these goals, the city has developed an effective collaborative of city stakeholders from several departments, including Recreation and Parks, Transportation, Zoning, and Planning. Furthermore, knowing that safe streets and sidewalks allow for increased physical activity, the City of Annapolis adopted a one-year \$17.8 million [Capital Plan in June of 2016 that focused on road resurfacing and sidewalk repair](#)

**Housing:** Through the Housing Authority of the City of Annapolis (HACA), the City recently [adopted a revised 5-year plan](#) to upgrade and redevelop their aging housing communities. The City is partnering with Arundel County Community Development Services to install new heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, energy-efficient appliances and lighting in existing homes, with the hopes of reducing hazards that can trigger poor health outcomes.

**Education:** The City of Annapolis is also working at the intersection of health and education. As part of a new initiative focusing on children, family, and community, Mayor Pantelides created a program called [Family Hood Scores!](#), a basketball league with mandatory half time sessions designed to give specific knowledge on topics including health, finance, employment, housing, voting, safety and other timely topics. At the forefront of these efforts is the utilization of a [“two generation approach”](#) with an emphasis on educating parents and caregivers, in addition to children, on issues of health.

**Employee Wellness:** Citing the high cost of healthcare as a government agency, an interest in focusing on the prevention of chronic disease, and a desire to have city employees “lead by example,” Mayor Pantelides offers a comprehensive employee wellness package for all city employees, which includes free access to the [Pip Moyer Recreation Center](#) as an incentive to start or maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The City of Annapolis is a good model for other communities looking to join the movement to build a Culture of Health. By expanding the scope of their work beyond childhood obesity and defining health more broadly, Annapolis is on a strong path to success.