Dear Fellow Advocates:

Last year was a year of focused action in three strategic areas—advocacy, community action, and youth engagement—to build communities that promote and support healthy eating and active living in our state. Our efforts to lower obesity rates became more focused on communities where obesity rates are among the highest. The Eat Smart Move More South Carolina (ESMMSC) staff continued to provide statewide technical assistance and support our communities. A few highlights of our efforts include:

- **The Healthy Food in Schools Bill (S484)**, which focuses on strengthening healthy eating in schools, successfully passed the SC Senate, paving the way for potential success in the SC House. National security organization Mission: Readiness hosted a press conference in support of the bill, highlighting that obesity is the leading reason our young adults can’t serve in the military.

- **The Let’s Go! South Carolina Community Initiative** expanded into six counties with support from BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. We also launched LetsGoSC.org, featuring an interactive map that pinpoints inexpensive or free options for healthy eating and physical activity across the state.

- We strengthened and expanded the **Healthy Young People Empowerment (HYPE) Project** with support from SC DHEC and SC Institute of Medicine and Public Health. Technical assistance and support were provided in several counties to integrate and connect HYPE teams to existing local coalitions—a strategy to strengthen influence and maximize efforts of positive change.

Collaboration is fundamental to our success. ESMMSC cannot do this work alone, and we are fortunate to have over 2,300 partners, including 22 local chapters, community coalitions and a network of public and private partners to make the healthy choice the easy choice for everyone.

Thank you all for being champions for health in South Carolina! We still have much work ahead.

Eleanor Dunlap
2015 Chairman

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**Eat Smart Move More SC (ESMMSC)**

is a private nonprofit, dedicated to working with community and state partners to address issues related to obesity and to improve the health of all South Carolinians.

**Our Collaborators**

- SCale Down
- ESMM Chapters
- Food Access Taskforce
- Mission: Readiness
- SCMA Childhood Obesity Task Force
- SC Schools Network
- SC Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness
- Voices for Healthy Kids State Network
- SC Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- SC Association for the Advancement of Health Education
- SC Department of Health & Environmental Control
# Measuring Our Impact

## Online Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>Social Media Users Reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lets Go! SC</strong></td>
<td>8,729</td>
<td>456,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website visitors</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning visitors</td>
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<tr>
<td>New visitors</td>
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<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESMMSC</strong></td>
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<td>708,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website visitors</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Returning visitors</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New visitors</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## HYPE Project Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># of Youth Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ESMMSC Chapters

- **Advocacy**
  - SC Senate passed the Healthy Food in School Bill S484 in a 39-3 vote
  - Created the Open Community Use Playbook in partnership with SC DHEC
  - Awarded $250K in grants to farmers markets in Greenwood, Charleston and Spartanburg counties, impacting 71,000 SNAP recipients

- **Community Action**
  - Awarded 6 Let’s Go! SC grants totaling $1.3M to communities reaching over 600,000 South Carolinians

- **Youth Engagement**
  - 174 youth participants from 11 rural counties were recruited to take part in HYPE Project teams
Why Our Work Matters

39.2% SC Youth (ages 10-17) are Overweight or Obese

32.1% SC Adults are Overweight or Obese

States with Highest Childhood Obesity Rates:

- SC
- MS
- DC

Estimated Cost of Obesity in SC

$8.5B per year

Taxpayers pay more than half of this expense through Medicaid, Medicare, or private insurance costs

People with Obesity-Related Health Issues in SC*

- Diabetes: 429,273
- Hypertension: 961,722
- Heart Disease: 289,176
- Arthritis: 947,357
- Obesity-Related Cancer: 75,148

*Data as of 2010

Obesity or being overweight is the leading medical reason young adults cannot join the military.

1 in 4 Young Americans and 48.4% of young SC adults cannot join the military due to their weight


Ensuring school-aged children across the state have equal access to healthy foods is an integral component of obesity prevention and reduction. Thanks to the support of the SC Senate, we are making progress on creating healthy school food environments in South Carolina.

In a 39-3 vote, the S.C. Senate passed the Healthy Food in Schools Bill (S484). The vote was successful thanks, in part, to our grassroots support system. Next steps are to pass S484 in the SC House of Representatives and have it signed into law.

Mission: Readiness, a nonpartisan national security organization of retired, senior military leaders, supported ESMMSC’s cause at a press conference detailing the latest report on obesity’s impact on military preparedness. Mission: Readiness’ message and support of S484 was of particular importance to key decision makers.

Open Community Use of School Recreation Facilities
ESMMSC collaborated with SC DHEC on an open community use playbook, which outlines how schools and communities can work together to provide public access to school recreation facilities. The playbook is based on the SC School Board Association’s model open community use policy (KFA).
Obesity and National Security

Our nation’s military leaders are addressing childhood obesity because it has become the leading reason why young adults cannot join the military. US Navy Rear Admiral (Retired) Robert E. Besal is one of those military leaders advocating for healthier lifestyles.

Why did you get involved with Mission: Readiness?
Working to ensure our service recruiters have a deep pool of fully qualified potential recruits seemed like a worthwhile and personally satisfying endeavor. After 30 years of active duty in the US Navy, I became aware of the challenges faced by our service recruiters today. They have a real competitive fight on their hands. Many prospects are intelligent enough, but simply cannot qualify for physical reasons—mostly due to obesity.

What is the connection between obesity and national security?
The physical demands in any branch of the military are very high. There’s no acceptable substitute for a higher than average level of body strength and stamina, and these attributes just aren’t possible with an obese body. Service life is one of personal discipline too. These qualities of strength, stamina and discipline are critical for a force that’s ready to fight and win when the nation calls.

Do schools play a role in preventing obesity?
I believe the bedrock of future physical fitness is formed in the early school years, when young minds are open to new ideas. Ensuring students are made aware of the importance of exercise and proper nutrition often begins in the classroom, and must be reinforced by daily action. Providing nutritious meals and exercise activities contribute positively to healthy bodies—and that’s why Mission: Readiness members believe our schools are essential partners in our challenge to reduce and prevent obesity.

How can people support healthy school environments?
I understand that school administrators and parents are often faced with difficult financial decisions, and every choice probably has trade-offs. I encourage them all to try to take “the long view.” Decisions that contribute to the likelihood of obesity may give a short-term win to the school, family budget, or just to the taste buds. Over the long haul, they’re detrimental to the physical health of our students, the greater good of our society, and the security of our nation. I urge parents and school administrators to please step up to the obesity prevention challenge—it’s a marathon, not a sprint. Your kids and your nation deserve your leadership efforts, and some day they’ll thank you for them.

“Schools are essential partners in our challenge to reduce and prevent obesity.”
Leveraging Expertise to Assist Communities

ESMMSC provides expertise and technical support to community coalitions. Staff maintain strong relationships with community coalitions and are often the go-to source for overcoming barriers and implementing evidence-based strategies to their fullest potential.

**Lets Go! South Carolina**
ESMMSC kicked off the Let’s Go! South Carolina Initiative, funded by the BlueCross BlueShield of SC Foundation, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, to expand obesity prevention in six counties -- Anderson, Barnwell, Hampton, Kershaw, Laurens, and York. The estimated reach for the six funded counties is 610,214, nearly 13% of the state’s total population. This expansion project replicates work done during the pilot project in Colleton County. Initiative objectives are:

- Increase access to healthy foods and daily physical activity in communities and schools.
- Track student fitness levels and BMI with FITNESSGRAM®.
- Increase youth engagement by establishing and maintaining HYPE Project teams.
- Populate and promote the LetsGoSC.org map for residents to locate healthy resources in their area.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farmers Market Grant**
ESMMSC received a two-year USDA grant through a partnership with Hub City Farmers Market and the USC Center for Research in Nutrition and Health Disparities to assist Travelers Rest Farmers Market and Johns Island Farmers Market in increasing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) use at the farmers markets. Lessons learned will be used to support other markets throughout the state.

**Active Community Environment (ACE) Special Project**
ESMMSC and SC DHEC assisted six communities in developing and implementing local projects that increased access to safe places to be physically active. Lessons learned are being used to assist other communities in planning for ACE strategies, such as bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Project participants were: Barnwell, Colleton, Greenwood, Lexington, Newberry, and Richland counties.

**Newberry County**
Through the Active Community Environment Special Project, Newberry County identified gaps in connectivity between Scott’s Greenway and the West End neighborhood, which led to the City of Newberry installing federally-compliant and ADA-compliant signs and ramps.
Let’s Go!: Laurens County

Laurens County is one of six communities participating in the Let’s Go! South Carolina Community Initiative, and Brie Holmes is their community coach. Brie talks about her role and some successes Laurens County has achieved since the start of the project in April 2015.

What is your role as the Let’s Go! Community Coach?
I see myself as a connector between the coalition and our community. A big part of my role is creating opportunities for conversations around healthy eating and active living (HEAL), and pulling people together to focus on a common goal.

What are the top priorities in the Let’s Go! project?
We recently submitted 25 recommended HEAL policies to our city comprehensive plan committee, all of which were accepted! Our goals for 2016 revolve around taking those policies off the paper and making them living, breathing changes in the community, and using campaigns and local events to draw attention to the policies and their outcomes.

What has been your biggest success?
As far as impact is concerned, I believe our biggest success was having so many HEAL policies added to our city’s comprehensive plan, where none existed previously. Having a stable backbone of policies in place is critical to the sustainability of healthy eating and active living efforts. It’s a pretty huge win for Laurens County.

Why is it important for businesses to support healthy food environments?
If you look at the healthiest communities across the US, they’re places where the physical environment is supportive of healthy living. If we are surrounded by healthy options, and in places where the healthy choice is the easy choice, then we are much more likely to live healthier lives. It just makes sense!

What are the top strategies SC communities are implementing?
ESMMS surveyed its chapters and partnering community coalitions to find out which healthy eating and active living strategies are priorities.

- Farmers markets
- SNAP/EBT/WIC Voucher/Senior Voucher at farmers markets
- Community gardens
- Walkability
- Bikeability
- Trails and Greenways development

Brie Holmes
Director of Wellness
Laurens Family YMCA
LetsGoSC.org: A Consumer Resource

In September, ESMMSC launched LetsGoSC.org, a new online resource that helps South Carolinians lead healthier lives. The website, combined with a social media promotional campaign, provides visitors with one-stop shopping for improving health.

The website features a searchable, interactive map of more than 1,300 healthy eating and active living locations throughout the state. Anyone can search for affordable and safe local resources in their area including: farmers markets, CSAs, trails, parks, and school playgrounds.

The website also features Eat Smart and Move More blogs written by reputable professionals from our state. Visitors can get information on topics such as healthy food trends, getting kids to eat fruits and vegetables, SC State Park programs, bicycle safety, and more. Blog posts become featured posts on the Let’s Go! South Carolina social media pages, which have gained interest not only from South Carolinians but also from health enthusiasts and organizations across the United States.

More than 1,300 points of interest on the Let’s Go! map

What is a CSA?
Anyone can buy a share in a Community Supported Agriculture program and get fresh, locally grown fruits and veggies delivered each week during the CSA season. Participating in a CSA helps farmers in buying their seeds and cultivating their produce.

Facebook Post
Hiking is a wonderful way to see more of your home state than ever before. Find a trail near you and share your South Carolina trail experiences and pictures with us!

Social Media Presence
Engaging Our Youth

Youth across South Carolina learned the importance of working with community leaders to accomplish their HYPE Project goals. HYPE teams took a more active role in advocating to local decision makers on local issues.

Advocating for Sustainable Change

In 2015, the HYPE Project became an objective of the Let’s Go! South Carolina Community Initiative. Coalition members learned firsthand that working with youth and connecting with HYPE teams can bolster the strategies they implement in the community.

A Multi-Year Initiative

Expanding HYPE projects into multi-year initiatives became a new focus for ESMMSC. Through a grant from the SC Institute of Medicine and Public Health, ESMMSC staff and existing HYPE teams in Lee, Aiken, Berkeley, Orangeburg, and Allendale counties began work on continuation projects. In addition, ESMMSC staff recruited HYPE teams from Florence and Greenville counties to focus on safety and physical activity through a partnership with SC DHEC.

HYPE BY THE NUMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HYPE Teams</th>
<th>Youth Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since 2012</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allendale County

Youth in Allendale County successfully advocated for a fresh fruit and veggie bar in the Allendale-Fairfax High School cafeteria. They conducted taste tests with students, faculty, and staff to determine if they would eat from the bar and what kinds of healthy foods they wanted to see on the bar.
The HYPE Project curriculum received a makeover in 2015 with the help of curriculum consultant Jessica Lawrence. A former health education teacher and health education curriculum specialist in Oregon, Jessica identified program improvements and provided insight on the role youth can play in their communities.

What are the CDC’s National Health Education Content Standards (NHES) and how do they relate to the HYPE Project?
Every subject area in school has a set of National Content Standards. The NHES went through a second revision in 2007, and I was one of the people selected to review, revise, and re-write the document. The HYPE curriculum is aligned to the Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool and, therefore, the NHES. The alignment means that age-appropriate knowledge is incorporated, and the curriculum gives students the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate skills that will hopefully be applied to their everyday lives.

Why should communities involve youth in their HEAL strategies?
Involving youth to engage in HEAL strategies gives adult leaders an opportunity to co-create programs, policies, and practices that are current and resonate with young people.

Have you noticed a trend in youth engagement over the past few years?
I think over the years, adults are learning how to better equip students with a voice so that we can work together to create communities in which all people, including youth, can live their best lives. I’m seeing youth engagement increase nationally; however, we still have a long way to go!

How can youth be encouraged to take an active role in the health of their community?
Youth voice has shown to make a lot of positive changes in communities, so their involvement is welcomed and appreciated. Many times, adults create great programs, policies, and practices that benefit youth, but without the input of youth, these aren’t as strong, current, and appealing to youth as they could be!
Professional Development

ESMMSC offered professional development and education opportunities around healthy eating and active living throughout the year. Audiences included community coalitions and other partners from the public health, government, health care, and education sectors.

12th Annual SC Obesity Summit
October 26, 2015
Nearly 300 healthy eating and active living advocates shared lessons learned in obesity prevention during breakout sessions and networking events.

3rd Annual HYPE Project Youth Summit
May 16, 2015
More than 100 HYPE Project youth and adult advisors shared successes of creating positive changes in their schools and neighborhoods.

Action Leadership Institute
April 23-24, 2015
Let’s Go! South Carolina Community Initiative team members learned about successful HEAL strategies, incorporating youth voice to impact project outcomes, and creating an effective action plan.

HYPE Project Adult Advisor & Community Coach Workshop
September 14-15, 2015
Let’s Go! South Carolina Community Coaches and HYPE Adult Advisors learned how to motivate youth to become effective advocates.

Regional Advocacy Workshops
Fall 2015
ESMMSC and the SC Community Loan Fund hosted regional advocacy workshops in the Lowcountry and Upstate. Staff and experts educated more than 50 participants on best practices for grassroots and media advocacy.

Schools Network Regional Workshops
Spring and Fall 2015
ESMMSC facilitated regional meetings of school health advocates in the Pee Dee and the Upstate. More than 50 school health advocates shared, learned, and identified ways to improve healthy eating and active living efforts in schools.
What is the connection between nutrition, physical activity, and learning?
We now have a growing body of research that shows nutrition and physical activity contribute to smart brains and super behavior. Numerous pieces of research point to the fact that kids who eat breakfast at school and get physical activity at recess have improved focus, concentration, and ability to perform on new tasks.

Why should parents be supportive of healthy foods in school?
Sometimes when healthy food gets brought to the forefront, people are focused on what you can’t have. The discussion should focus on what you can eat more of, as well as the family experience. I think schools should provide food activities that incorporate families. It’s really important to educate people on what is being offered in schools, and invite parents in for the opportunity to see for themselves.

How can advocates at different levels support nutrition in schools?
People have all sorts of views on what school meals are. So, again, it’s important to educate people about what the reality is, the good things going on in school meals; what is being served, what fruits and vegetables are available, and how schools are working to get kids involved in the process. For a long time, the cafeteria was just a student support service like bussing and custodians. Meals are not just a student support service. Nutrition in schools is vitally important to students’ academic performance and their behavior.

Why are you so invested in nutrition at school?
I believe that there is nothing more important to the future of our country than our children. It is our children who are going to become the teachers, superintendents, legislators, and President of the United States. We have to do everything we can to ensure those children have a solid foundation. New York hunger activist Joel Berg said, “To be well read, children must first be well-fed. To be schooled, they must be fueled.”

SC Obesity Summit keynote speaker Dayle Hayes, MS, RD, is passionate about the health of America’s students. She talks about the importance of schools making the connection between good nutrition, physical activity, and improved academic performance of students.
Financials 2015
State of Activity for the Year Ending December 31, 2015

### Income

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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
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<td>SC Dept. of Health &amp; Environmental Control</td>
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<td>BlueCross BlueShield of SC Foundation</td>
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<td>American Heart Association</td>
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<td>University of South Carolina</td>
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<td>SC Obesity Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Type of Income</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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### Expenses

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Community Grants</td>
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<td>Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diabetes Prevention Program</td>
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<td>Open Community Use</td>
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<td>Health + Planning</td>
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<td>Wisewoman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Healthy Aging (Arthritis)</td>
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<td>Active Community Environments</td>
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<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<td>SC Obesity Summit</td>
<td>21,305</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel, Training &amp; Meetings</td>
<td>33,557</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other &amp; Depreciation</td>
<td>6,471</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$831,043</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Income Sources

- **BCBSSCF** 45%
- **SCDHEC** 33%
- **AHA** 16%
- **Other** 1%
- **Public** 1%
- **Summit** 3%

### Expenses Categories

- **Personnel** 42%
- **Programs** 11%
- **Community Grants** 22%
- **Marketing** 6%
- **Other** 1%
- **Operations** 3%
- **Travel** 4%
Leadership Team

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Hannah Walters, MPH
Let’s Go! South Carolina Project Manager

Trimease K. Carter, MSW
Youth Engagement Manager

Coleman Tanner, MPH, CHES
Advocacy & Public Policy Manager
Our mission is to advance community-led change to reduce obesity, by making the healthy choice the easy choice for every South Carolinian.

Our vision is a South Carolina in which healthy eating and active living are central to the everyday culture where we eat, live, work, play and pray.