



PRESS RELEASE:
For Immediate Release

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**SAN PABLO COUNCILMEMBER JOINS POLICYMAKERS FROM
ACROSS THE COUNTRY
AT NATIONAL SUMMIT TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD OBESITY**

Summit offers strategies for preventing obesity on a budget

Washington, DC – San Pablo City Councilmember Leonard McNeil joined more than 200 elected and appointed officials and other policy leaders from across the nation at the 2011 Leadership for Healthy Communities Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit in Washington, DC. Representing states, schools and localities nationwide, participants addressed the significant social and economic benefits of preventing and reducing childhood obesity, and the importance of making it a policy priority in challenging economic times.

President Barack Obama proclaimed September 2011 as National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, calling childhood obesity “one of the most urgent health issues we face in this country.” Nearly one-third of children and adolescents, and more than two-thirds of adults in the United States are overweight or obese. In addition to its serious health consequences, childhood obesity has real economic costs that affect all of us. Childhood obesity costs an estimated \$14 billion per year in medical care alone, and the cost of adult obesity is estimated to be as high as \$147 billion each year.

“The need for action is clear. Each of us must do our part to create opportunities for children and adults in our communities to be more active and increase their access to healthy affordable foods,” said City Councilmember Leonard McNeil. *“Working together to develop and support policies that improve the health of our children and our communities can be done inexpensively, and can strengthen our economy.”*

At this year's summit, *Leadership for Healthy Communities* released *Obesity Prevention on a Budget: Low- and No-Cost Policy Options to Increase Healthy Eating and Active Living*, a toolkit to support policymakers who want to address obesity in communities and states with limited budgets. The toolkit outlines budget-conscious policy approaches that leverage existing resources and partnerships to reduce obesity rates by increasing opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Download the toolkit: <http://tinyurl.com/budgetobesityprevention>

“The City of San Pablo is actively supporting a Council-adopted policy which focuses on addressing the increased rates of obesity and diabetes rates in children which is at epidemic proportions in our urban community. More community awareness is needed to bring to the attention of youth and families the importance of making better choices to improve healthy eating and active living in our community,” said McNeil.

Recently, in July 2011, the City of San Pablo adopted a General Plan Update which included the City's first ever comprehensive Health Element component which introduced healthy eating and active living standards, and adopted these policies to be used as guidelines for future decision-making in land-use, planning and development.

Leadership for Healthy Communities is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support local and state government leaders nationwide in their efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating and access to healthy foods. For more information, visit www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation focuses on the pressing health and health care issues facing our country. As the nation's largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care, the Foundation works with a diverse group of organizations and individuals to identify solutions and achieve comprehensive, measureable and timely change. For nearly 40 years the Foundation has brought experience, commitment, and a rigorous, balanced approach to the problems that affect the health and health care of those it serves. When it comes to helping Americans lead healthier lives and get the care they need, the Foundation expects to make a difference in your lifetime. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org.

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