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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

TO: All newspapers and radio stations in Meeker, McLeod and Sibley Counties  
FROM: Allie Freidrichs, CHS Director

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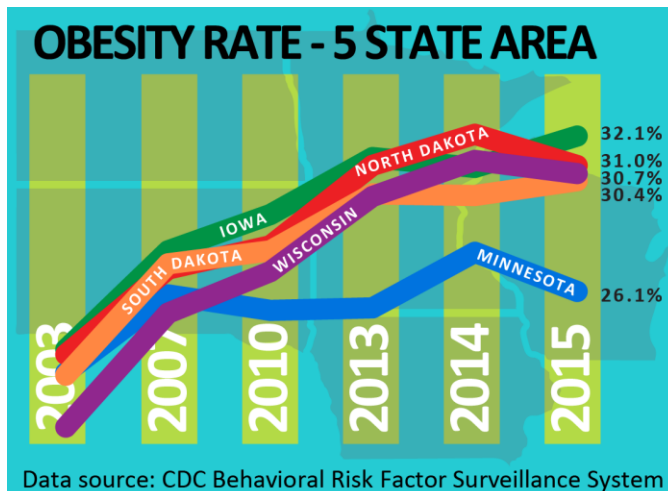
For immediate release  
Contact: Mary Bachman, 507-237-4000

**Minnesota sees significant drop in obesity rate**

*State's adult obesity rate remains lowest in the region*

The state's adult obesity rate saw a statistically significant drop between 2014 and 2015, from 27.6 percent in 2014 to 26.1 percent in 2015, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Minnesota was the only state in the region, including North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin and Iowa, to succeed in keeping its obesity rates firmly below 30 percent. According to data released early September by CDC, [neighboring states' rates](#) ranged from 30.7 to 32.1 percent. CDC released 2015 state- and territory-specific data on adult obesity prevalence using self-reported information from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). All states had more than one in five adults (20 percent) with obesity.



“Minnesota’s obesity rate is markedly lower than our surrounding states and we were still able to achieve a greater decrease in 2015 than our neighboring states,” said Minnesota Commissioner of Health Dr. Ed Ehlinger. “Achieving healthy weight for all Minnesotans is one of the key objectives for our Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) and its community and private sector partners. By working together we’ve been able to increase

opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity for all Minnesotans in every corner of the state.”

Obesity rates can have a major impact on health care costs for related chronic diseases like diabetes. In 2008, Minnesota policymakers responded to skyrocketing health care costs driven in part by rising obesity rates, by enacting SHIP, as part of Minnesota’s bipartisan health care reform legislation. Since that time, Minnesota’s obesity rate held steady until it ticked up from 2013 to 2014 (from 25.5 percent to 27.6 percent). These latest CDC findings confirm that Minnesota has returned to its historically low obesity rate that remains steady on a year-to-year basis even as other states and the U.S. as a whole continues on an upward trend.

According to combined data from the CDC, the adult obesity rate for African Americans in Minnesota was 29.9 percent, which is lower than the national figure of 38.1 percent. According to Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Behavior Survey results, in 2014, the obesity rates for adults ages 18 and older were: 37.2% Meeker, 30.5% McLeod and 35.4% Sibley. While it is great news that overall the state obesity rate has decreased there is still a significant amount of work to be done locally. Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services (MMS CHS) is working with many partners, such as local schools, farmers markets and worksites to name a few, on projects to improve healthy eating and physical activity options across the three counties. The goal of the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is to help Minnesotans live longer, healthier, better lives by preventing risk factors that lead to chronic disease. MMS CHS and the Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Healthy Communities Collaborative have been working for the past 6 1/2 years to help create good health where residents, live, work, learn and play. They are working together on making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice! You can find out about the work they do together at <http://www.mmshealthycommunities.org/> Additional results of the 2014 Community Behavior Health Survey can be found at <http://www.mmshealthycommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/MMS-Community-Health-Survey-Results-Public-Version.pdf>

Many factors play a role in obesity, making it a complex health issue to address. Across Minnesota, communities are working together through SHIP to expand healthy eating and active living opportunities along with tobacco prevention with multiple strategies, across multiple setting and sectors. SHIP spends \$17.5 million per year supporting grant funding to local community partners that is in all 87 counties and 10 tribal nations. SHIP grants support locally controlled community health boards, which have linked with more than 2,570 active partner sites. These efforts support and leverage the work of a variety of partners such as community groups, schools, employers, farmers, chambers of commerce, hospitals and health care facilities, city planners, county boards, tribal officials and more. For more information on the health of Meeker, McLeod, and Sibley Counties and the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) work that is occurring contact Mary Bachman, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services SHIP Coordinator at 507-237-4000

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