



# HEALTH EQUITY ZONE (HEZ)

## WASHINGTON COUNTY SOUTH COUNTY HEALTH



Focuses on programs to impact childhood obesity and mental health, as well as promoting healthy eating through programs with local farmers.

Health Equity Zones are geographical areas designed to achieve health equity by eliminating health disparities using place-based (where you live) strategies to promote healthy communities. Healthy communities are places where people live, work, play, and learn. These are neighborhoods consisting of social and physical environments that support healthy choices and safe living.

### STORY SPOTLIGHT: LAUREN NOCERA



Since the very beginning of her career, Lauren Nocera, Assistant VP Program Development and Grants at Thundermist, has been invested in improving the quality of life for others. She has a special interest in the intersection of health, health care access and social justice issues. Driven by her passion for community, Lauren got involved with Washington County HEZ with hopes of increasing access to affordable, healthy foods for Washington County residents.

Prior to HEZ, there were no farmers markets in South County that accepted Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Lauren and her team at Thundermist set out to make sure local farmers markets were accessible to all. Now six, soon to be seven farmers markets accept SNAP. Beyond that, they also now offer a 40 percent match for fruit and vegetable purchases.

**“The farmers markets make a healthy difference in people’s lives, and getting more people to the markets has a positive economic impact.”**

- Lauren Nocera

All the markets source from farmers living in Washington County, which helps the economy thrive. Overall, Lauren is proud of the work that has been done to increase access to healthy foods for Washington County residents, and is proud of the positive impact her work is having on the community.

### BACKGROUND INFO

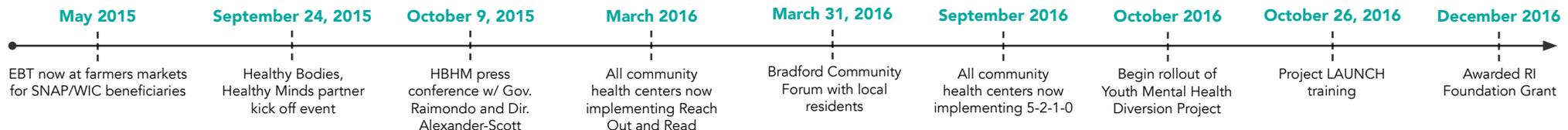
Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds is a vigorous, collaborative, long-term effort to transform community health in Washington County. This county comprises nine cities and towns, many of which hug Rhode Island’s southern coast. The region features both affluence and “invisible” pockets of poverty which has led to health disparities which **Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds** has been addressing. The Washington County HEZ promotes programs related to childhood obesity and mental health. Some of the programs they have been working with include:

- **5-2-1-0;**
- **Reach Out and Read;**
- **Youth Mental Health First Aid.**

The Washington County HEZ also focuses on connecting residents to local farmers markets accepting SNAP and WIC benefits for access to healthy food.



### TIMELINE OF EVENTS:



## SPOTLIGHT PROGRAM: 5-2-1-0



**5-2-1-0** is a prescription for living a healthy lifestyle. The evidence-based program stands for five servings of fruits or veggies a day, two hours or less of recreational screen time, one hour or more of physical activity, and zero sugary drinks. The program is designed to decrease the rates of childhood obesity and to encourage youth to live a healthy lifestyle. Since **Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds** has been up and running, they have made it possible for all five community health centers in South County to implement 5-2-1-0. In addition to community health centers, 5-2-1-0 is now also offered in 28 schools throughout South County.

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## WHERE WE ARE AND WHERE WE ARE GOING

The Washington County Health Equity Zone has been successfully advancing four foundations of healthy living for area residents. The HEZ has set a foundation of research, brought diverse people and organizations together, and promoted key initiatives in key areas including healthy eating and physical activity, mental wellness and early childhood development. From April 2015 to December 2016, the **Youth Mental Health First Aid Trainings** certified 513 Adults as youth mental health responders. As of December 2016, 21 schools now offer the **5-2-1-0** program to address childhood obesity. **Reach Out and Read**, which encourages parents to read to their child every day, is now offered at five community health centers in Washington County.



Susan Orban, LICSW

**“Going forward, Washington County HEZ will continue to expand access to these great evidence-based programs, engage residents, and transform the community.”**

- Susan Orban

**Shared public health strategic priorities working with partners statewide.**

3/28/2017

- Addressing the social and environmental determinants of health
- Eliminating the disparities of health and promote health equity
- Ensuring access to quality health services including vulnerable populations.

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