

**MOVE****WITH THE****MAYOR™****ATHENS**

# PROMOTING HEALTHY LIVING IN ATHENS, TENNESSEE

*Athens has developed strong partnerships that residents benefit from. From healthcare to exercise, events and resources are easy to access, helping Athens community members live healthier lives.*

## "Walking for the Health of McMinn"

Move with the Mayor™ (MWTM) has been added to the Community Health Improvement Plan as a vital function in changing Athens and McMinn County health stats. The county-wide community walking program serves as a part of MWTM.



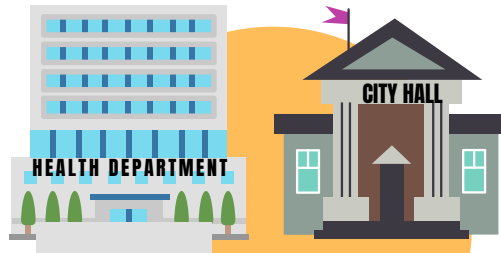
**Miles Walked**  
**6,639**



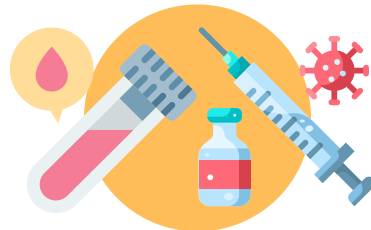
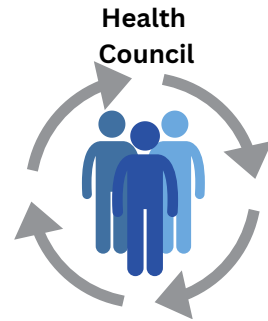
**People Participated**  
**220**

*\*March 3 to August 23, 2022*

## City Partnerships



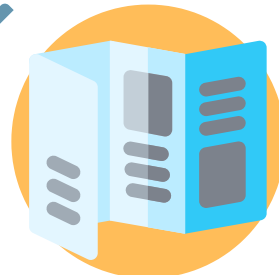
The city partners with the Tennessee Department of Health and Health Council, producing several events, and offering information during local food distribution events and to schools.



Mass vaccination drives and testing events



Resource van is used for welfare checks and food distribution



Health resources for students

## Athens and McMinn County created the Eureka trail



Rail to trail conversion



Good for all ages



5.6 Miles Nature Trail



Connects to neighboring town



Different level hikes available

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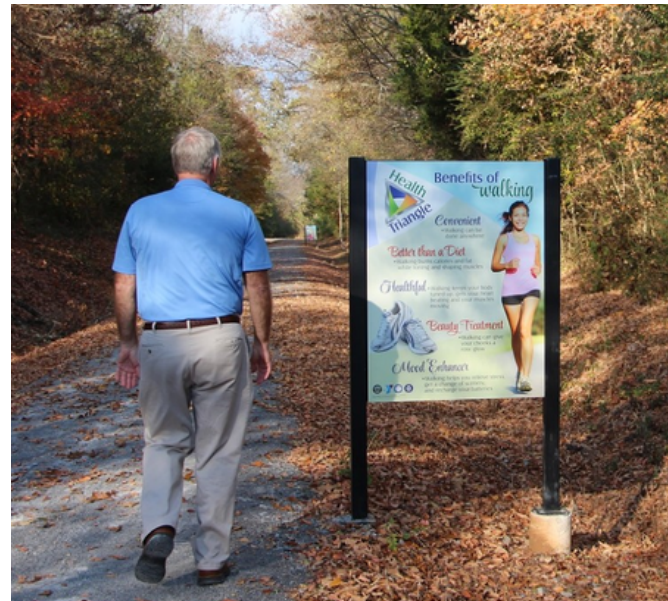
## Partnerships to Encourage Healthy Living

The City and Health Department work together on several events throughout the year, including mass vaccination drives and testing. The Health Department regularly provides resources and information during local food distribution events. When youth vaping was identified as a priority by school representatives on the Health Council, the Health Department stepped up to provide education in schools.

## Connecting People

In 2022, Athens implemented a county-wide exercise program for the community as part of Move with the Mayor. Over 220 community members participated and logged 6,629 walking miles. Athens and McMinn County have joined together to create a 5.6-mile Rails to Trails conversion that bisects the county and connects Athens to a neighboring town. The trail was developed as a regional health initiative. Athens is developing a mobility plan to add bike lanes and dedicated bikeways in town and expand sidewalks.

The Health Council and City have a mutually beneficial relationship - each brings its resources to the table and willingly shares, for the benefit of all. To further strengthen this bond, the Health Council will have regular opportunities to present on their work to the City Council.



Mayor Steve Sherlin  
Athens, TN

## Lessons Learned

- Reach out to local organizations to identify common goals
- Bring information to where your residents are
- Teach residents how to use local resources

# A Successful City-County-Health Department Partnership in Athens, TN

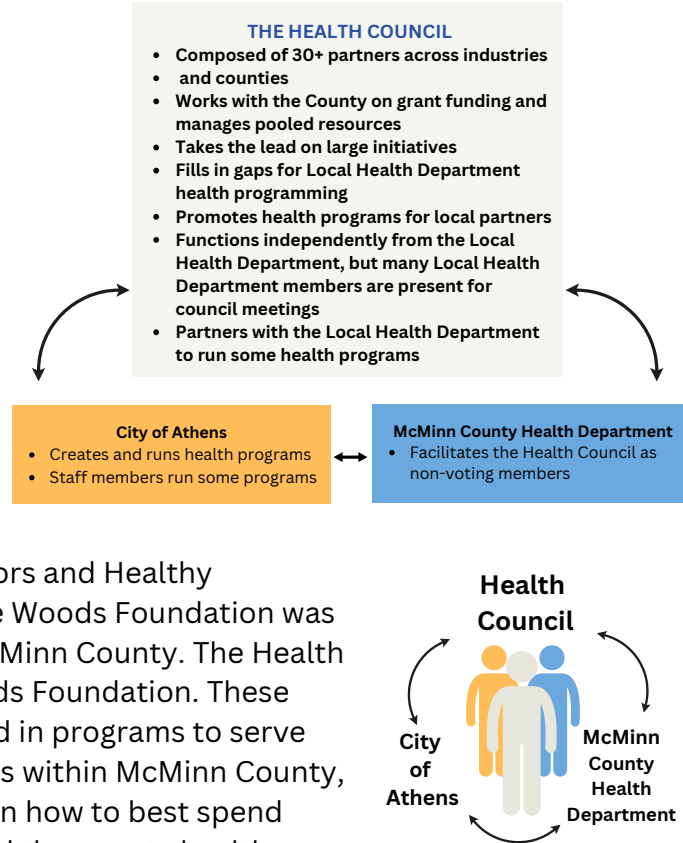


## CASE STUDY

*Partnerships have been essential to the success of local public health projects that serve the unmet needs of residents in Athens, Tennessee. The city, along with other cities in the county, have spent the last 8 years building partnerships, and the Athens community continues to reap the rewards.*

### Introduction

Tennessee established County Health Councils over three decades ago to bring community partners together to promote health. Move with the Mayor™ participants Athens and the McMinn County Health Council have worked closely together for many years to bring this vision to life. Having strong personal and professional ties within the Mayor's Office has been instrumental in ensuring the partnership remains strong. A high level of underlying trust enables everyone to remain on the same page and work together to share resources. The Health Council meets monthly to discuss priorities, identify areas for collaborative action, and share resources. It is supported by the Tennessee Department of Health with Health Educators and Healthy Development Coordinators assigned to McMinn County. The Woods Foundation was created from the sale of the Woods Memorial Hospital in McMinn County. The Health Council assists in managing pooled resources from the Woods Foundation. These funds were placed into the Woods Foundation to be invested in programs to serve the unmet needs of Athens residents, in addition to residents within McMinn County, Tennessee. As an example, the Health Council is consulted on how to best spend dollars received from lawsuits related to the opioid crisis and the county health trust.



### Identifying Priorities

In Fall 2022, the City, County, and Health Council engaged the community to conduct a health assessment. They received nearly 400 survey responses and heard feedback at three listening sessions to identify residents' top health priorities. This information was compiled into a three-year "Community Health Improvement Plan" (CHIP). The Health Council evaluates monthly and then will re-evaluate after 3 years. Move with the Mayor™ has been added to the CHIP as a vital function in changing Athens and McMinn County health stats. The McMinn County Health Council gives quarterly updates to the Athens City Council. Data sharing is a core part of the relationship between the Health Council and the City. The Health Council and Health Department regularly share data, so the City understands the health needs of the community. The City reciprocates by sharing data back with the Health Council—such as the number of people who come to joint events (screenings, testing, vaccination drives, etc.).

"Our partnership remains strong, because we're all on the same page, and we work together to share all of our resources"



**Mayor Steve Sherlin**  
Athens, TN

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Collaborate with local partners** from a range of different sectors
- **Find common goals** and develop a strong mission
- **Create local relationships** and nurture them over time
- **Pool resources** to accomplish large goals