



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

## **TEXANS STEP UP FOR HEALTH: COMMUNITY CHALLENGE CLOSES WITH RECORD WINS AND A NEW AWARD HONORING LEGACY LEADERSHIP**

**AUSTIN, TX – April 25, 2025** The 13th annual *Community Challenge* has wrapped up with record participation, statewide celebrations, and a renewed commitment to building a healthier Texas. Organized by Healthier Texas, the eight-week competition engaged residents, schools, organizations, and local leaders across the state to log healthy activities and support community-wide wellness.

This year's Challenge saw standout performances from metro cities, border towns, and rural communities alike, highlighting how every region of Texas is rising to meet the moment with creativity, energy, and collaboration.

### **San Antonio Takes the Gold – Again**

A major highlight of the 2025 Challenge was **San Antonio's 10th win** in the Metro category – a first in the program's history. With over **1,200 participants**, the city logged more than **12 million points**, **15,800 miles**, and **815,000 minutes** of physical activity, earning the **state champion title for the third consecutive year**.

"This is more than an award – it's a testament to what's possible when we center health in our work as public servants," said **Mayor Ron Nirenberg**. "I am honored to accept this recognition on behalf of the entire San Antonio community. Our city has shown year after year what we can accomplish when we move together – literally and figuratively – for a healthier future."

### **Honoring Leadership: The Nirenberg Community Health Leader Award**

To mark this milestone, Healthier Texas introduced a new annual award: the **Nirenberg Community Health Leader Award**. Named for Mayor Nirenberg, the award will honor one exceptional Texas leader each year whose commitment to public health reflects the Mayor's legacy of inclusive, community-centered action.

"To have this award reflect a cause so close to my heart – health and fitness for all – is incredibly meaningful," Nirenberg shared. "I share it with everyone who has contributed to this work over the years."

"This award is about more than a single person – it's about inspiring others to step up for the health of their communities," added **Jamie Williams**, CEO of Healthier Texas. "Mayor Nirenberg

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has demonstrated what leadership rooted in wellness, equity, and consistency looks like. We are proud to carry his legacy forward through this annual recognition.”

## Statewide Success Stories

From bustling metros to rural towns, Texans rallied together to track healthy habits, host local events, and empower neighbors to take action. Participation came not only from individuals, but also from entire school districts, employer teams, city governments, and public health partners.

“The Community Challenge is more than a competition – it’s a reflection of the strength and resilience of our state,” said **Jamie Williams**, CEO of Healthier Texas. “Texas is growing fast. By 2045, one in seven Americans will call Texas home. How we support the health of our people today will shape the future of our schools, our economy, and our neighborhoods. These communities are proving that health isn’t a luxury – it’s a shared responsibility.”

Community Challenge participant Cecilia Fernandez of San Antonio shared how the experience made a lasting difference in her daily life. “It has taught me discipline and endurance to practice healthy eating, drinking plenty of water and exercise makes for a happy mind and a happy person.”

## Highlights from Across the State

- **Pharr** (Mid-Sized 1st place) logged **6.2 million points** with more than 1,000 participants. Community Champion **Vanessa Soto** organized 17 wellness events. Top performer **Napoleon Daniel Coca** recorded 4,450 minutes of activity and 119 referrals.
- **McAllen** (Large 1st place) reclaimed the top spot with strong participation across public entities and schools.
- **Stockdale** (Extra Small 1st place) led both community and school district categories – an example of how rural communities can achieve outsized impact through collaboration.
- **Harlingen** (Mid-Sized 3rd & School District 1st) united municipal and school efforts for a double win, backed by enthusiastic student, staff, and family participation.



- **North East ISD** (Metro 1st place) helped fuel San Antonio’s success by rallying over 800 participants across campuses and neighborhoods.
- **Alamo, Edinburg, San Juan, Baytown, and Laredo** also made strong showings – proof that diverse communities across the state are finding local solutions to improve health outcomes.

“Every healthy choice, every walk logged, every community event helped Texans invest in themselves and one another,” said **Amelia Carnagey**, Director of Marketing. “This collective energy is what turns a simple challenge into lasting change.”

## By the Numbers

- **12.1 million+ points** earned by San Antonio
- **6.2 million points** from the City of Pharr
- **3685 miles** tracked in Pharr alone
- **815,969 minutes** of activity logged by San Antonio
- **800+ participants** from North East ISD
- **Dozens of events** hosted across Texas during Public Health Week and beyond

## 2025 Community Challenge Winners

### Community Winners

**Metro:** San Antonio | Austin | Houston

**Large:** McAllen | Laredo | Edinburg

**Mid-Sized:** Pharr | Baytown | Harlingen

**Small:** Alamo | San Juan | Los Fresnos

**Extra Small:** Stockdale | Smithville | Hardin

### School District Winners

**Metro:** North East ISD | Pasadena ISD | IDEA Public Schools

**Large:** Pharr–San Juan–Alamo ISD | Goose Creek CISD | McAllen ISD

**Mid-Sized:** Harlingen CISD | Los Fresnos CISD | Bastrop ISD



**Small:** La Feria ISD | Hereford ISD | Lockhart ISD

**Extra Small:** Stockdale ISD | Smithville ISD | Hardin ISD

To learn more about the Challenge and view the full leaderboard, visit:  
[txcommunitychallenge.org](http://txcommunitychallenge.org)

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#### **About Healthier Texas**

Healthier Texas is a statewide nonprofit committed to reducing preventable diseases and improving the health and well-being of Texans. The organization fosters healthier communities through **innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and advocacy** aimed at overcoming the challenges that impact health and well-being.

Learn more at [healthiertextas.org](http://healthiertextas.org)

#### **For Media Inquiries, Please Contact:**






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Image	Pictured	Note	Link	Location
	Left to Right - Amelia Carnagey, Nathaniel Aranda, Mayor Nirenberg, Jamie Williams, Lonnica Maxwell, Alezandra Aleman	Healthier Texas Staff with Mayor Ron Nirenberg following the Community Challenge celebration in San Antonio.	<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX
	Left to Right - Lonnica Maxwell, Dr. Claude Jacobs, Councilwoman Terry Castillo, Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Jamie William's (Healthier Texas CEO - Speaking)	CEO of Healthier Texas speaking and announcing the 10 <sup>th</sup> Community Challenge win for the San Antonio Community.	<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX
	Left to Right - Jamie Williams, Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Nathaniel Aranda	Mayor Nirenberg holding up the 10 <sup>th</sup> Community Challenge trophy received by the San Antonio community.	<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX
	-	Community members gathered to hear from San Antonio and Healthier Texas leaders in celebration of the Community Challenge.	<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX
	Left to Right - Lonnica Maxwell, Dr. Claude Jacobs, Nathaniel Aranda, Councilwoman Terry Castillo, Mayor Ron Nirenberg, Jamie William's (Healthier Texas CEO - Speaking)	Mayor Nirenberg receiving the inaugural <i>Nirenberg Community Health Leader Award</i> to honor his passion for health and the legacy he will be leaving as his term comes to an end.	<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX



	Top 5 Winners of the Community Challenge		<a href="#">Link</a>	San Antonio, TX
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