



NEWS RELEASE

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Aberdeen, Martin and Sioux Falls receive 2022 Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark Community Award

Good & Healthy South Dakota awards communities for their health improvement work

SIOUX FALLS, South Dakota (Oct. 13, 2022) — Three South Dakota communities — Aberdeen, Martin and Sioux Falls — were each presented with a 2022 Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark Community Award during the Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion Annual Partners Meeting held Wednesday, Oct. 12. The award is recognition for their accomplishments in health improvement initiatives within their respective communities.

“We are pleased to present these communities with the 2022 Healthy HometownSM Powered by Wellmark Community Award,” said Laura Jackson, Wellmark’s executive vice president, health equity, access & improvement. “The work that has been done within these communities is to be celebrated. And because this work is so important, Aberdeen, Martin and Sioux Falls will also each receive \$5,000 to continue improving the physical, social and emotional well-being of the community.”

Some noteworthy achievements in Aberdeen, a multi-year award winning community, include:

- Providing free breakfast to school-aged students, resulting in a 15% increase in participation, and offering unlimited access to fruits and vegetables.
- Creating a safe and accessible pathway by adding 4,830 feet of new sidewalks.
- Installing a new traffic signal with pedestrian crossing system to increase walker safety near a high school and growing neighborhood.

“The diverse and passionate group of individuals working toward our Healthy Hometown initiatives in the Hub City are grateful for this gift and will use it wisely to make our community better,” said Lisa Anderson,

Aberdeen Chamber Wellness Committee. “There is much work yet to be done, and we will continue to work toward the goals on our master plan. We are grateful for Wellmark’s dedication and appreciate the partnership.”

Some noteworthy achievements in Martin include:

- Implementing a community mural at Brooks Memorial City Park using local artists’ designs with people of all ages and abilities participating in painting.
- Promoting social connectedness by hosting inaugural Marketing Hometown America events, building a Little Free Library and Little Free Food Pantry.
- Revitalizing Hope Garden with new garden beds and plants and increasing use of the garden by area community members.

“Martin is honored to be recognized as a Healthy Hometown award winner,” said Tauna Ireland, Martin Wellness Coalition. “We have been working together since 2017 on ways to improve our town and we aren’t done yet! This funding will help us continue the good work that is already happening.”

Some noteworthy achievements in Sioux Falls include:

- Investing over \$2 million in sidewalk and crosswalk improvements to promote walkability and bikeability.
- Adding 11.4 miles of bike trails as part of the Cherry Creek Trail extension, providing neighborhood connectedness.
- Partnering with the Partnership for a Healthier America to address healthy food access and provide food boxes to more than 500 families.

“We don’t do this work to be recognized; however, it is so meaningful for Sioux Falls to be awarded a 2022 Healthy Hometown Community Award and to shine that recognition back on to our wonderful partners,” said Shelby Kommes, public health prevention coordinator. “The collaborative effort is invaluable in ensuring the well-being of our community. We will continue to work together to ensure that Sioux Falls is a healthy place to live, learn, work, play, and age.”

The Healthy Hometown Powered by Wellmark Community Award celebrates the successes achieved by these three communities to make South Dakota a healthier, more active place to live. To find out more information about this initiative, visit [Wellmark.com/HealthyHometown](https://www.wellmark.com/HealthyHometown).

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About the South Dakota Department of Health

Working together to promote, protect and improve health, the Department of Health uses its 2020-2025 strategic plan to guide future initiatives. Learn more at <http://doh.sd.gov/strategicplan>.