



Farmington Valley Health District

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Please support **HB 6840** which would provide funding for a first-rate active transportation network of bike lanes, greenways, multiuse paths, and pedestrian infrastructure in Connecticut. As a local health department serving ten towns in the Farmington Valley and a population of 110,000, we will not be effective in reducing the economic and social burden of poor health without investing in systems that promote active living. Chronic disease resulting from inactivity, overweight and obesity are on the rise and affecting populations at a much younger age. It is forecasted that this generation of children has a shorter life expectancy than their parents in large part due to obesity and increases in diabetes.

Studies have shown that rates of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes are lower in communities where a higher percentage of commuters bicycle or walk to work or school. Connecticut needs to invest in a future in which biking and walking is far easier to do. Support of this bill will help move in that direction. Further, biking and walking are cost-effective ways to reduce traffic congestion while reducing pollution caused by automobile traffic. Since transportation is the biggest contributor to greenhouse gases in Connecticut, consider the impact that biking and walking has on reducing emissions and greenhouse gasses. Active transportation must be a key piece of our climate action plan.

Connecticut's car-dependent lifestyle is not the lifestyle that millennials or the creative class have in mind. A well-designed active transportation network will help bring millennials and the creative class to Connecticut and keep them here, strengthening our economy. Additionally, walkable, bikeable places would boost tourism immeasurably, with benefits spreading throughout our economy.

Please consider the health of our residents and our communities and support HB 6840.

Jennifer C. Kertanis, MPH
Director
Farmington Valley Health District