



PRESS RELEASE

**EUGENE FAMILY YMCA RECEIVES COVETED ENDORSEMENT
FROM LANE COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY**
***Capital Campaign for a New Y is endorsed by oldest physician
organization in Lane County***

Eugene, Ore., February 15, 2022 —

The Capital Campaign for a New Y has received a coveted endorsement from the Lane County Medical Society, a professional organization of physician members who advocate for the health of the community.

"We, as physicians, know the importance of health as well as community, and there is an institution that embodies both—our local YMCA," said Dr. Kevin Modeste, Lane County Medical Society 2022 Board President. "The physicians at Lane County Medical Society have seen the benefits this institution brings to our community as a pillar of support for families and encouragement toward a healthy lifestyle. Some of us have even used the facilities at the beloved Y right next to our patients. LCMS is happy to endorse the YMCA and support their Capital Campaign for a new building."

The Lane County Medical Society has approximately 800 physician members. A 15-member board oversees the association, and votes on endorsements. The New Y project is one of very few endorsements in the society's 133-year history.

The Capital Campaign for a New Y is in its community fundraising phase, raising \$5 million toward its \$42 million goal. The New Y replaces an aging, outdated facility built in 1955 and located at 2055 Patterson Street.

The New Y, on the corner of Hilyard Street and 24th Avenue, triples the space for health and wellness, allows for the expansion of current disease-prevention initiatives such as diabetes prevention, and promises to add new programming such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's support and falls prevention.

"Expansion of the Eugene Family YMCA's services represents a vital tool to address the social determinants of health and bend the medical cost curve. The New Y will be Grand Central Station for individuals' health journeys—some focused on maintaining fitness or getting started with exercise and others enrolled in programs for specific health risks or medical conditions. Everyone at the Y will receive the mental health benefits of making new friends, being greeted warmly by Y staff and learning something new in their classes," said Eugene Family YMCA CEO Brian Steffen. "We are honored that the board at Lane County Medical Society endorses this vision, and we know that this partnership will mean real and dramatic success in the health arena."

It's important because of what's at stake:

- According to the Department of Public Health and Human Services, more than 133 million Americans are living with a chronic disease & chronic disease problems are going to increase if not effectively addressed.
- Lane County residents have higher rates of: cancer mortality, lung disease mortality, stroke mortality, suicide mortality, and prevalence of fair or poor health in adults than state averages, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- According to the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment, which informs the 2021–2025 Community Health Improvement Plan, childhood obesity rates in Lane County are continuing to rise, and the percent of youth reporting “good physical health” is declining.

The Eugene Family YMCA, founded in Eugene in 1887, shares Lane County Medical Society’s longevity in this community, which means both organizations have a unique understanding of Lane County and its evolving needs.

The Lane County Medical Society recognized not only the Y programming pre-COVID that serves more than 18,000 people a year, but also the Y’s swift response to a global pandemic to prevent social isolation, loneliness and inactivity, which can all lead to a decline in mental health.

“COVID-19 showed the strength of the Y during incredible hardship,” said Lane County Medical Society Executive Director Shondra Holliday. “Our community needs a strong, efficiently designed Y to focus on the situation at hand.”

Currently, the Y has health initiative programs for those with prediabetes; cancer or recent cancer treatment; arthritis, fibromyalgia or joint surgery; and fitness classes for all levels. In fact, the Eugene Y was the first in Oregon to launch the CDC’s evidence-based LIVESTRONG® at the Y cancer survivors’ program, and one of the first five Ys in the nation to launch the CDC’s evidence-based Diabetes Prevention Program.

However, the current facility is not capable of expanding these or additional programs despite the growing waitlists of people hoping to enroll and the clear success rate for participants.

"Doing this class was so worth it," said Shirley "Rainy" Howell, who participated in the Y’s Diabetes Prevention Program in 2018. "I am no longer prediabetic. The only thing holding out is my cholesterol, but even that is improving."

The New Y is on track to break ground in July 2022 and open in December 2023.

“We are honored and grateful to Lane County Medical Society for their endorsement,” said Eugene Family YMCA Chief Development Officer Danielle Uhlhorn. “We are looking forward to partnering further when the facility opens.”

Learn more about the New Y [HERE](#).

Learn more about Lane County Medical Society [HERE](#).

Media inquires, please contact:
Eugene Family YMCA
Beth Casper
503-302-8776 (mobile)
beth@eugeneymca.org

###

About the Eugene Family YMCA

The Eugene Family YMCA is one of the region's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Each year across Lane County, the Y engages more than 18,000 people regardless of age, gender, income or background—to nurture the potential of children, teens and seniors; improve health and well-being; and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. In 2020, the Eugene Family YMCA awarded \$413,506 in financial assistance. The YMCA has been serving the Eugene-area since 1887.

eugeneymca.org



