



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Tim Kennedy Secures \$400,000 in State Funding for YMCA Statewide Initiative to Combat Childhood Obesity

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY May 28, 2019

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BUFFALO, N.Y. – On Tuesday, Senator Tim Kennedy (D-Buffalo) joined the Alliance of New York State YMCAs at YMCA Buffalo Niagara’s William-Emslie Family YMCA to announce their success in securing \$400,000 in the 2019-2020 State Budget for the Y’s Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) Standards initiative.

According to the New York State Department of Health, one-third of children in New York are obese or overweight - a number that has tripled over the past three decades. To tide the epidemic, YMCAs across the state implement the Y's HEPA Standards in their youth programming to teach children and their families how to make healthier choices. The HEPA Standards act as a guide for building lifelong, healthy habits in the areas of family engagement, food, beverages, screen time, infant feeding, and physical activity.

"New York needs to do its part to ensure that healthy families are fueled by healthy choices, whether that's through developing well-rounded eating habits or promoting physical activity," said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. "Through this state investment, the YMCA's incredible HEPA program will be able to continue to educate families on how to make the choices that are best for them and empower our next generation to live active and balanced lives."

The Alliance of New York State YMCAs is a not-for-profit association representing the interests of 39 independently incorporated YMCAs throughout the state. The Alliance advocates and educates on behalf of the YMCA and its mission to promote youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

"We are grateful for Senator Kennedy's support of the Y's mission to foster a healthier New York," said **Kyle Stewart, Executive Director of the Alliance of New York State YMCAs**. "The Senator's commitment to our cause has resulted in valuable resources that will benefit thousands of children and families across the state."

By introducing children to the HEPA Standards through fun and engaging methods, the YMCA builds the foundation for a child's social and physical development and improves the likelihood for a healthier future.

Funding is sub-granted to YMCA Associations across the state by the New York State YMCA Foundation, Inc. to further implement or expand the HEPA Standards in Y programs. At the William-Emslie Family YMCA in Buffalo, HEPA monies were allocated towards the construction of an outdoor community garden, maintained by children in YMCA childcare programs throughout the year.