

NEWS

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CDHD Honors Long-Time Champion for Health in Valley County

Cascade – Around Valley County, the name Lyle Nelson is undoubtedly a familiar one. The four-time Olympian competed in the biathlon for the US team, served as a national TV analyst for Nordic events in the 1994 and 1998 Olympic Winter Games and his name adorns the Tamarack Resort Nordic and snowshoe trail system.

While commonly known for his career in athletics, Nelson is also a long-standing and dedicated champion in community health. This year, Nelson helped bring home the gold medal equivalent when Valley County was ranked the number one healthiest county in Idaho. The top position is among the 2016 County Health Rankings, published by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The rankings compare the health of nearly every county in the nation, looking at more than 30 factors that influence health, including education, housing, jobs, smoking, access to healthy food, and more.

In recognition for his direct contributions to making Valley County a healthier place to live, the Central District Health Department (CDHD) presented Mr. Nelson with its *Leadership in Community Health* award during a meeting with Valley County Commissioners on Friday. CDHD's Leadership in Community Health award recognizes community champions who promote and uphold CDHD's vision of *Healthy People in Healthy Communities*.

"CDHD began a relationship with Mr. Nelson back in 2012 when the county health rankings indicated some disparity. Valley County was ranked 5th for Health Outcomes which look at things like length and quality of life, but it ranked 25th for Health Factors, which include health behaviors, physical environments and social and economic factors. We remember Mr. Nelson declaring a vision at that time, which he helped make a reality, and that was to make Valley County the top healthiest county in the state of Idaho. We applaud Mr. Nelson for his vision and the work he does each day in the community to bring the right people together for the shared goal of Healthy People in Healthy Communities," said Russ Duke, CDHD's District Director.

Mr. Nelson has worked diligently on the Community Health Improvement Plan, Valley Adams Health Improvement Coalition, has been a leader among the West Central Mountains America's Best Communities group, and developed a "Life 101" initiative to help people achieve healthier and more joyful living. Recently, Mr. Nelson worked alongside a CDHD staffer to help with tobacco prevention messaging during the McCall-Donnelly schools Extreme Challenge event involving sixth through eighth graders. "He loves the focus of working together and community

partnerships. Lyle has a gift for connecting the dots — putting people together from different sectors to create change and great outcomes,” said Suzanne Mack of CDHD’s Valley County office.

Mr. Nelson serves as the Director of Community Relations and Health Promotions for St. Luke’s McCall.

About Central District Health

Through its programs and policy development, CDHD works to improve the quality of life and decrease risk factors for chronic disease within Health District 4, which encompasses Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley counties. CDHD serves Valley County through septic and food establishment permitting and inspections, the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program, reproductive health care visits and care, tobacco prevention and cessation resources, oral health care and immunizations for kids and community outreach. CDHD’s office is located at 703 1st Street in McCall.

For more information on CDHD’s initiatives, programs and services, visit www.cdhd.idaho.gov.

About the County Health Rankings

The *Rankings* compare the health of nearly every county in the nation, looking at more than 30 factors that influence health, including education, housing, jobs, smoking, access to healthy food, and more. The *Rankings* are based on the latest publicly available data for each county and are unique local tools that every county can use to measure where its residents stand on multiple factors that influence health compared to other counties in their state. To view the county health rankings, visit www.countyhealthrankings.org.

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