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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Public Health Expands Certified Healthy Restaurant Initiative**

Kern County Public Health is excited to expand and grow our healthy restaurant initiative “Certified Healthy” that empowers residents to choose restaurants in their area that offer healthier food options. Since our 2018 launch, the program has expanded to include “Certified Healthy Mobile” which includes mobile food facilities, such as food trucks. Given that Americans eat more than 50% of their meals away from home, it is important to recognize and highlight local food facilities that offer healthier food options.

Unfortunately, Kern County has some of the highest rates of obesity and mortality due to chronic health conditions in the state. In fact, 78% of Kern County adults are either overweight or obese and more Kern County residents die from diabetes than anywhere else in California. Out of all California counties, Kern ranks fourth for the highest rates of deaths due to heart disease and has heart disease death rates 43% higher than the state average. Because of these startling statistics, in February, we issued a Call to Action to our residents, pleading “Let’s Get Healthy, Kern!” Together, as a community and with the help of Kern’s food service industry, we can help improve these statistics!

“Certified Healthy is another free resource available to our community to address obesity and chronic disease in Kern County,” says Brynn Carrigan, Director of Public Health. “Download our Safe Diner app today to assist in your road to better health.”

Certified Healthy uses various nutritional criteria to identify menu items that are healthy and can be used to lower heart disease and obesity risks. Restaurants and mobile food facilities that achieve this bold standard are recognized with our Certified Healthy logo on the restaurant grading card or mobile permit sticker. Also, using a filter on our free [SafeDiner](#) app assists users in selecting healthier choices as they navigate our interactive GIS mapping system that pinpoints your location to find Certified Healthy restaurants near you.

Below are comments from some of our valued Certified Healthy partners:

*"The Certified Healthy program has been a real win-win! Our Lite Menu is the first thing customers see. It is great to be a part of helping Kern County address chronic obesity. We love this program!"*

*Joe Coughlin, Owner of Coconut Joe's*

*"Certified Healthy makes it so easy to find great healthy food from awesome local businesses."*

*Jina McMillan, Owner of Better Bowls*

*"Eating Healthy can be flavorful and easy, which is what we strive for here at Locale. Certified Healthy connects our community with restaurants that are dedicated to the well-being of Kern County."*

*Heather Laganelli, Founder/CEO of Locale Farm to Table Eatery*

*"Thank you Certified Healthy for recognizing local restaurants like us who create menus to combat obesity and other chronic diseases."*

*Chelsey Hall, Founder/CEO of Modern Grub*

To learn more about this exciting initiative please visit our [website](#).