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Arkansas Lawmakers, Constitutional Officers Cutting Sugary Drinks for *CapitolGO!* Challenge

LITTLE ROCK — If you've been to the Arkansas State Capitol since the Legislature's fiscal session began last week, you may have noticed some people toting identical green water bottles. The bottles are part of the 2018 *CapitolGO!* Healthy Hydration Challenge, which enlists state legislators, constitutional officers and their staff to hydrate in a healthy way.

The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI) created the *CapitolGO!* Challenge to bring to the forefront the priorities of Gov. Asa Hutchinson's Healthy Active Arkansas initiative. This year's challenge follows the success of 2017's *CapitolGO!* steps challenge, in which teams representing the Arkansas House of Representatives, Senate and Governor's Office logged more than 30 million steps.

This year, teams representing those bodies, as well as the offices of the lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, auditor and treasurer, are competing to achieve daily healthy hydration goals.

Each team member logs his or her consumption of non-sugar-sweetened, non-alcoholic fluids on a mobile phone app, Aqualert, and seeks to achieve a personalized daily hydration goal. Teams' scores are based on a combination of participation and consumption of healthy fluids.

“The *CapitolGO!* Healthy Hydration Challenge is a way for our legislators, constitutional officers and others who work at the state Capitol to lead by example as they reduce their consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, one of the leading contributors to the obesity epidemic,” said ACHI President and CEO Dr. Joe Thompson. “Something as simple as not putting sugar in your tea can be the start of a lifelong habit for better health.”

The challenge kicked off Feb. 14 and is expected to end Feb. 28. The winning team will take control of the Healthy Active Arkansas championship belt and have bragging rights until the 2019 legislative session.

In last year’s steps challenge, the belt went to the Senate, which logged an average of 6,743 steps per day. As of Wednesday morning, the Auditor’s Office was leading the Healthy Hydration Challenge.

The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement organizes the *CapitolGO!* Challenge with funding from the Blue & You Foundation for a Healthier Arkansas.

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State Sen. Jim Hendren, R-Sulphur Springs, brings his Healthy Active Arkansas water bottle to the Senate chamber recently during the *CapitolGO!* Healthy Hydration Challenge, a competition organized by the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement that promotes reduced consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages.