

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2008

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Health Department begins journey to national accreditation

(Lawrence, KS) – Health departments around the country are preparing for national accreditation – an effort that will begin in 2011 and will help ensure they are providing quality public health services and programs to improve the health of their communities.

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has begun that process and was recently awarded a grant from a national health organization to assist in that plan.

The grant, awarded to the Health Department by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), was one of 21 grants presented. More than 60 health departments were considered.

One important step in the move toward accreditation has been fulfilled. Last month, Health Department program managers completed a self-assessment, which allowed the health department to measure itself against NACCHO's Operational Definition of a Functional Health Department and to identify strengths and areas where improvement is needed.

The Operational Definition lists standards to guide a health department's fundamental responsibilities of what people in any community can reasonably expect their local health department to fulfill. For more information on accreditation and a link to the Operational Definition of a Functional Local Health Department, see <http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/accreditation/History.cfm>.

“We believe accreditation is an important vehicle for meeting the needs of the public and is a visible demonstration of our commitment to public health,” said Dan Partridge, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department Director.

The Health Department will use the grant funds to assist in analyzing the self-assessment, identifying at least one priority area and applying a quality improvement process to address the area. A quality improvement consultant will assist the department in addressing these and other assessment needs.

-30-

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