

NEWS RELEASE
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Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department awarded \$1.3 million to help drive down chronic diseases in Douglas County

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has received a three-year award of approximately \$1.3 million to reduce chronic diseases in Douglas County. The Health Department’s work will focus on improving nutrition, increasing physical activity, and reducing tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke. The award is the largest grant received by the Health Department to address chronic diseases, which account for 7 out of 10 deaths in the U.S. each year.

Director Dan Partridge said, “We are no longer dying from diseases like polio and smallpox; instead, we are dying from chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer, and the leading causes of these diseases are a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet and tobacco use. We are working with community partners to address these diseases and this grant will allow us to expand our efforts significantly.”

The Health Department received a “Partnerships to Improve Community Health” award, which is part of a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiative to support public health efforts to reduce chronic diseases, promote healthier lifestyles, reduce health disparities, and control health care spending. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will administer the grants. Overall, HHS awarded \$50.3 million in grant awards to 39 local health agencies.

Community Health Director Chris Tilden said LiveWell Lawrence, a coalition of more than 170 people who are working to improve health in Douglas County, would play a key role in bringing community partners together to advance the work of the project. “This grant will enable LiveWell Lawrence to take the work that it’s doing to the next level,” he said.

The grant money will be used for community projects such as expanding the reach and scope of the Safe Routes to School program, improving the local food system and combating the growing use of electronic cigarettes, especially among youth.

Douglas County Commission Chair Nancy Thellman, a LiveWell Lawrence member, said the award provides a significant opportunity for the community. “I’m excited about this huge grant and I am so happy for our community. This represents an amazing collaborative effort and I stand in awe of how much these

folks have already accomplished. With this kind of funding boost I expect we'll see measurable improvements in our community's health as even more inroads are made toward walkability, healthy food and healthy habits," she said.

About the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 120 years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment.

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