

**NEWS RELEASE**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 14, 2015

**Contact:** Karrey Britt  
Communications Coordinator  
Office: (785) 856-7362

## **Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department awarded national accreditation by Public Health Accreditation Board**

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of the nation's public health departments.

"By receiving accredited status, the Health Department has reached an important milestone," Director Dan Partridge said. "Our pursuit of accreditation has always been grounded in service to our community and the belief that by becoming accredited we would increase our understanding of local health concerns, strengthen our community partnerships and ultimately achieve better health outcomes."

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation's more than 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

"I am extremely proud that our City-County Health Department has achieved accreditation," Health Board member David Ambler said. "Being accredited assures the people of Lawrence and Douglas County that their Health Department operates at the highest level of professionalism in providing a healthy environment for all its citizens. It means that our competent staff is engaged in new and creative ways to protect and promote the health of all of our citizens."

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

"The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health

mission,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender. “The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community.”

The national accreditation program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Since the program’s launch in September 2011, hundreds of public health departments have applied to PHAB for accreditation, and hundreds of public health practitioners from across the nation have been trained to serve as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

“Achieving accreditation indicates that the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department is dedicated to improving and protecting the health of the community by striving to continuously improve the quality of the services it delivers,” said Leslie M. Beitsch, chair of PHAB’s Board of Directors and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine at Florida State University College of Medicine. “Accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. With an ever-increasing number of health departments now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States.”

### **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.

### **About the Public Health Accreditation Board**

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting [www.phaboard.org](http://www.phaboard.org).