

**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Health Department earns national Model Practice Award for initiative to prevent heart attacks and stroke**

**(Lawrence, KS)** — The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department was honored with the Model Practice Award at the 2017 annual conference of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The award celebrates local health departments for developing programs that demonstrate exemplary and replicable best practices in response to a critical local public health need.

The Health Department's initiative "Integrating Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention into a Family Planning Clinic: An Innovative Million Hearts Project" was one of 41 initiatives to receive NACCHO's prestigious Model Practice Award.

Heart attacks and stroke account for 1 in 4 deaths and represent the second and sixth leading causes of death in Douglas County, respectively. High blood pressure and tobacco use are two factors that put people at higher risk for heart attacks and stroke.

In 2014, the Health Department began examining how information about high blood pressure and tobacco use was being collected in its Electronic Health Record (EHR) system for patients who use Family Planning services, which includes sexually-transmitted disease testing, well-woman examinations and birth control counseling. Changes to processes for data input and reporting were made to the EHR system, which enabled the Health Department to analyze data in a way that had not been feasible before the adoption of the electronic record system. Analysis of the data showed that elevated blood pressure readings were observed during 1 in 5 encounters and approximately 1 in 4 clients were smokers. The average age of these clients: 27 years old.

The Health Department then updated its protocols to have a standardized approach to screening, education and referrals for elevated blood pressure and smoking cessation in the Family Planning clinic. When patients have elevated blood pressure or use tobacco, they are counseled and then referred to primary care for further consultation and treatment as appropriate.

"As part of the national Million Hearts initiative to reduce heart attacks and stroke, we focused on identifying people who likely have not been seen by a primary care provider. Often, we are the only source of care for residents," Director Dan Partridge said. "Our goal is to help catch these risk factors in residents as soon as possible and put them on the path to a healthier future."

Since 2003, NACCHO’s Model Practice Awards have honored programs, resources and tools that demonstrate how local health departments and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health challenges. Each innovative project receiving the Model Practice Award was peer-reviewed and selected from a competitive group of more than 100 applicants.

“This award puts Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department in special company with a select group of health departments that exemplify a forward-thinking, proactive approach toward protecting and promoting the health of communities nationwide,” said NACCHO Interim Executive Director and Chief of Government Affairs Laura Hanen.

“Integrating Heart Attack and Stroke Prevention into a Family Planning Clinic: An Innovative Million Hearts Project” is now part of an online, searchable database of successful public health practices in areas that range from immunization and maternal and child health to infectious diseases and emergency preparedness. The NACCHO Model Practice database allows local health departments, public health partners and other important stakeholders to learn about the work being done by local health departments across the country. The database also provides users an opportunity to learn from best practices what resources are needed to implement comparable programs in other jurisdictions that produce results.

Read more about these award-winning programs at <https://application.naccho.org/Public/Applications/Search>.

### **About the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department**

The nationally-accredited 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 National Association of County and City Health Officials**

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents the nation’s 2,800 local governmental health departments. These cities, counties, metropolitan, district and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities.