

NEWS RELEASE
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Douglas County residents urged to provide feedback at Community Health Forums in August

(Lawrence, KS) – Findings from the Douglas County Community Health Assessment will be presented at four forums in August. Residents are urged to attend the forums to provide input on the results and to suggest next steps in the process, which will involve creation of a Community Health Improvement Plan. The plan will be used as a guiding document for community leaders and policymakers in Douglas County.

Forum dates are:

- **Wednesday, Aug. 16** — 5-7 p.m., Baldwin City Library, 800 Seventh St., Baldwin City.
- **Tuesday, Aug. 22** — 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Community Health Facility, 200 Maine St., Lawrence.
- **Wednesday, Aug. 23** — 6:30-8:30 p.m., Eudora Community Recreation Center, 1630 Elm St., Eudora.
- **Thursday, Aug. 24** — 5-7 p.m., Lawrence Public Library auditorium, 707 Vermont St., Lawrence.

The forums are free and open to the public. Food and beverages will be provided.

“Results from the assessment show that our health status is not just about health care. It’s about creating job opportunities, providing safe and affordable housing, and ensuring children and youth are free from abuse and neglect,” said Director Dan Partridge, of the Lawrence-Douglas Health Department. “If we’re going to improve our health moving forward, we have to include all community perspectives in the conversation.”

Lawrence Memorial Hospital President and CEO Russ Johnson agrees. “In our Destination Health strategic plan, we identified population health as an important initiative,” Johnson said. “Partnering with other organizations and the community to improve health more broadly is population health. LMH is strongly committed to our purpose of being ‘A Partner for Lifelong Health.’ A collaborative approach is essential, and it begins with conversations and feedback.”

The Community Health Assessment was developed to specifically include residents typically underrepresented. The assessment includes: a survey that was completed by 2,000 Douglas County residents; newly-analyzed data about life expectancy, leading causes of death and other health outcomes in Douglas County; and a PhotoVoice project where area youth used photography to identify health concerns and strengths.

Through the Community Health Assessment process, common health challenges emerged:

- Access to affordable housing
- Alcohol, tobacco and drugs
- Barriers to accessing healthy foods and food insecurity
- Child abuse and neglect
- Discrimination
- Mental health
- Physical activity
- Preventive care services and clinical linkages
- Poverty and good-paying jobs

“These are big challenges affecting our health, and that’s why we need to work together to make progress on them,” Partridge said. “I’m looking forward to hearing the community’s thoughts about how we can best tackle these challenges.”

A Steering Committee, representing agencies across Douglas County, is leading the Community Health Assessment process. Those agencies include: Douglas County, City of Lawrence, City of Eudora, Baldwin City, City of Lecompton, KU Center for Community Health and Development, Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, LiveWell Lawrence, Heartland Community Health Center, Health Care Access, Douglas County Dental Clinic, Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center, DCCCA, Haskell Indian Health Center, Douglas County Community Foundation, The Lawrence Chamber, K-State Research and Extension — Douglas County, Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority, Peaslee Tech and Saint Luke’s AME Church.

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.

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