



We build strong kids,
strong families,
strong communities.

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BLOOMINGTON – NORMAL, ILLINOIS SELECTED FOR NATIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE; ACHIEVE INITIATIVE FUELS COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO COMBAT OBESITY AND CHRONIC DISEASES

One of 40 Communities Named Across the U.S.

(BLOOMINGTON, IL FEBRUARY 18, 2010) – Bloomington-Normal is one of 40 communities selected in 23 states to advance community leadership in the nation’s efforts to prevent chronic diseases and related risk factors through the Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental changE (ACHIEVE) initiative, supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s Healthy Communities Program. The announcement has been made by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA)

The purpose of ACHIEVE is to bring together local leaders and stakeholders to build healthier communities by promoting policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that focus on physical activity, nutrition, tobacco cessation, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ACHIEVE is an innovative approach that brings together all sectors of a community to spur policy change toward prevention of chronic diseases.

The Bloomington-Normal YMCA applied for this program and was selected after a competitive review process. The YMCA is a component of the McLean County Wellness Coalition that is comprised of Illinois State University, McLean County Health Department, Normal Parks and Recreation, Children’s Discovery Museum, McLean County Unit 5 School District, Bloomington School District 87, Bloomington Parks and Recreation, Advocate BroMenn Medical Center, OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, Heartland Head Start, and the United Way of Mclean County

“As part of the McLean County Wellness Coalition, Illinois State University is pleased to partner with the Bloomington-Normal YMCA to support the ACHIEVE Initiative”, said Dr. Marilyn Morrow.

“Promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting healthy communities will help us meet our goal of reducing

chronic diseases. Through community collaboration, we can create a synergy that assists people in making healthy choices where they live, work and play.”

“The team-based approach modeled on YMCA of the USA’s Pioneering Healthier Communities, allows communities to provide a cohesive response to the lifestyle challenges facing our nation,” said B.J. Wilken, Executive Director of the Bloomington-Normal YMCA. “By connecting the leaders who can affect change, communities are helping to make healthy behaviors an easier choice, not just the healthier choice. These improved opportunities for active living and healthy eating are laying a foundation to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases that have taken such a serious toll on Americans.”

“A combination of tobacco use, poor diet, and physical inactivity contributes to the leading cause of heart disease and other chronic diseases in this country” said Jackie Lanier, Health Promotion Specialist for the McLean County Health Department. “The ACHIEVE grant will aid in our process toward a reduction of the incidents of chronic diseases in our community.”

In October 2009, the McLean County Wellness Coalition led by Dr. Marilyn Morrow of Illinois State University and Jackie Lanier of the McLean County Health Department, held its first ‘Overweight and Obesity Summit’ upon which 50 individuals representing 21 different organizations convened to share information on the issue. Jeff Sunderlin, Activate America Project Manager for the YMCA of the USA and Illinois State University alumnus, provided statistical data indicating sixty-seven percent of adults in America are either overweight or obese, and thirty-five percent of children in Illinois are either overweight or obese.

The ACHIEVE approach aims to promote improvements such as increased access to and use of attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; revised school food contracts that include more fruits and vegetables and whole grain foods; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly, among others.

ACHIEVE fosters collaborative partnerships between city and county health officials, city and county government, parks and recreation departments, local YMCAs, local health-related coalitions, and other representatives from the school, business, health, and community sectors. State Departments of Health are also available to help provide state-based resources and information as well as linkages to other collaborators to help communities meet their goals. ACHIEVE recognizes the roles of these institutions as trusted community conveners and aims to combine public health expertise from the state and local levels with the experience of the YMCA and local parks and recreation departments that have expertise in providing community support and outreach.

The 40 communities selected to join the initiative will become part of an aggressive social movement that is mobilizing leaders in local communities to respond to the public health challenge of obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition. This movement was inspired, in part, by YMCA of the USA’s Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC). So far, 118 communities have convened leadership teams through PHC and Statewide PHC, and another 30 communities have convened through ACHIEVE

to make changes in their communities. For a complete listing of all funded communities, please visit the ACHIEVE Web site at www.achievecommunities.org or CDC's Healthy Communities Program's Web site at: www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram.

What's Next for ACHIEVE teams

YMCA's, parks and recreation departments, and local health departments will immediately begin to compose teams consisting of 10 local leaders. The teams will include: elected officials; state and local directors of public health organizations; business leaders from various industries; and, leaders of local schools, parks and recreation departments, hospitals, and other community organizations. These teams will convene at an Action Institute in June 2010. At the conference, attendees learn about evidence-based approaches to affecting change in their communities from nationally known experts. The team will return to Bloomington-Normal and begin working on a Community Action Plan (CAP)

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Illinois State University

The oldest and one of the largest public universities in Illinois, Illinois State University is a comprehensive, residential university with six colleges and 35 academic departments and schools, which offer more than 198 fields of study in undergraduate and graduate programs. Illinois State has been listed as one of 100 best values in public universities in the country for the past five years by Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine.

The YMCA: A Long-Standing Commitment to Health of Spirit, Mind and Body

YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the nation's 2,663 YMCAs, which serve nearly 20.2 million people each year, including 9.4 million children under the age of 18. Through a variety of programs and services focused on the holistic development of children and youth, health and well-being for all and family strengthening, YMCAs unite men, women and children of all ages, faiths, backgrounds, abilities and income levels. From urban areas to small towns, YMCAs have proudly served America's communities for nearly 160 years by building healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Visit www.ymca.net to find your local YMCA.

The Bloomington-Normal YMCA, founded in 1855, is the oldest continually existing human service organization in McLean County. The YMCA provides health and well being opportunities to approximately 4000 individuals in McLean County regardless of the ability to pay for services. Each year, the YMCA provides financial assistance to approximately 500 children and families and forgives approximately \$98,000 annually. For more information about the YMCA, please contact Sandy Zarndt; Membership and Marketing Director, at (309) 827-6233.