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Health Department Receives Grants to Address Health Inequality and Opioid Epidemic

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has received two federal grants totaling nearly \$1.7 million that will assist in addressing health inequality and the opioid epidemic across the county.

“We’re excited to receive these grants, both of which were very competitive grants, that will help us address some of the county’s most challenging issues,” said Director Dr. Karen Hacker. “The projects supported by these grants align with our priorities outlined in the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny and support our goal of health equity. We’re grateful to have the support and hope to make progress on both issues in our community.”

The first grant, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention REACH (Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health), is aimed at reducing risk factors associated with chronic disease in African-American populations that live in six high-risk target areas in the county. The \$734,563 in funding will involve multiple community partners that will focus on food access, improving options for physical activity, and connections to clinical care. In addition, mini-grants will be available to organizations to support a communications strategy and strengthen the grassroots infrastructure for community health.

Along with various county departments, partners in the REACH grant include the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh, fitUnited, Just Harvest, The Food Trust, Healthy Start, Inc., the Pittsburgh Black Breastfeeding Circle, Duquesne University School of Pharmacy, YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, the University of Pittsburgh, and the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank.

ACHD also received a two-year, \$480,000 per year, grant from SAMSHA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) which is focused on enhancing first responder’s access to naloxone, naloxone distribution and training, and enhancing connections to recovery resources. Specifically, the funding will support the training and distribution of additional naloxone to police departments, fire departments and naloxone leave-behind, as well as supporting the training of community members and organizations on preventing overdoses and administering naloxone in high-risk areas.

The Department of Human Services is a primary partner for the SAMSHA grant as department employees will work to increase referrals to care and to other recovery resources. Additional partners include Prevention Point Pittsburgh and CONNECT.

For more information on the Chronic Disease Prevention Program, visit: <http://bit.ly/2HHoAiZ>. To learn more about what ACHD and its partners are doing to address the opioid epidemic, visit: <http://bit.ly/2BwrARu>.

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