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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Families encouraged to participate in Bike to School Day on May 4

Lawrence, Kan. — The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages students to walk or bike to school May 4 in celebration of National Bike to School Day. Walking and bicycling to school enables children to incorporate the regular physical activity they need each day while also forming healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

The Health Department, in collaboration with the City of Lawrence, Lawrence Public Schools, the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization and LiveWell Lawrence, is working to encourage families to walk or bike as part of “Be Active Safe Routes,” a community initiative to make it easier for people of all ages, ability, background and socioeconomic status to be more active.

Regular physical activity helps children build strong bones, muscles and joints, and it decreases the risk of chronic conditions like Type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. “Physical inactivity is at crisis proportions in America. In the coming decade, preventable chronic conditions are expected to overtake tobacco as the leading cause of death in Kansas,” Health Promotion Specialist Michael Showalter said. “The research is clear that students who walk or bike to school will be healthier and perform better in school.”

Lawrence middle and elementary school students, families and staff plan to participate in Bike to School Day. Schools also will be hosting special events like park-and-rides and bicycle rodeos. Lawrence-Douglas County Health Board members, Lawrence school board members, city commissioners and firefighters have been invited to join in the activities throughout Lawrence. Helmets should be worn at all times when riding a bike. Bicyclists should ride safely by following the rules of the road and obeying traffic laws. Young children should be accompanied by an adult.

Benefits of walking or biking include:

- Students who walk or bike to school are healthier.
- Research has shown exercise before school helps children arrive focused and ready to learn.
- Students who walk and bike frequently when they are young are more likely to continue these activities into adulthood.
- When walking or biking, parents and children get an opportunity to bond and appreciate things they don’t notice while driving — listening to the sounds of the neighborhood, seeing friends and neighbors and feeling connected with their community.
- Fewer cars on the road means less traffic and congestion and cleaner air.