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NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Families encouraged to participate in Bike to School Day on May 10

Lawrence, Kan. — The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department encourages students to walk or bike to school May 10 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.

Research shows getting regular physical activity before school boosts learning and memory and helps students stay more on task. Walking or biking regularly also can significantly reduce the risk of childhood obesity and related health risks, such as diabetes. “Besides the physical activity benefits, walking or biking to school also gives students a sense of independence and responsibility,” Health Promotion Specialist Michael Showalter said. “It allows them to enjoy being outside and gives them a chance to learn more about their neighborhood.”

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 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. Bikes must be walked across streets manned by school crossing guards.

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.