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**NEWS RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** George Diepenbrock  
Communications Officer  
Office: (785) 856-7360

**Douglas County selected as finalist for RWJ Culture of Health Prize**  
*Community improvement efforts recognized among eight national finalists*

**LAWRENCE** – Douglas County has advanced to the final group among eight communities for the prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Culture of Health Prize. As a 2020 finalist, the coalition of Douglas County partners is one step closer to the national Prize which honors communities working at the forefront of advancing health, opportunity and equity for all.

The foundation will announce winners of the prize this fall, and the selection committee will make site visits to the eight communities as part of deliberation in the final round.

“We are pleased to advance as a RWJF Culture of Health Prize finalist community. To the Douglas County community, it means a great deal to be recognized for working together in new ways to advance health for all,” said Sarah Hartsig, Community Health Planner for Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health. “We credit our advancement as a finalist to the hard work of so many community members who have worked to offer solutions and opportunities in areas that include affordable housing, behavioral health, healthy food access and providing healthy futures.”

As part of Douglas County’s Phase II application, you can [watch this Community Voices Entry](#), which features Douglas County residents who have worked on making progress in:

- Integrating Arts and Social Science to serve behavioral health needs
- Building a Peer Support System of Care in Behavioral Health
- Affordable Housing solutions for all residents
- Building a Community of Learning and Practice for Equity

Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health and K-State Research and Extension - Douglas County provided support to produce the video.

This spring, Douglas County looks forward to hosting a Prize site visit team from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, and members of the Prize National Advisory Group.

“Recognition as a finalist reflects the community values and commitment to our shared vision to create the conditions where everyone can have a fair and just opportunity to be healthier,” said Dan Partridge, Director of Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health.

The seven other communities selected as RWJF Culture of Health Prize finalists are Addison, Ill., Alamosa County, Colo., Chickaloon Native Village (Alaska), Drew, Miss., National City, Calif., Tulsa County, Okla., and Worcester, Mass.

“Since 2013, Prize communities have shown the nation what is possible when leaders and residents join forces to remove barriers to health — from creating new jobs and improving high school graduation rates to expanding affordable housing,” said Dr. Richard Besser, RWJF president and CEO. “We look forward to visiting each finalist community in the coming months to learn more about how they are expanding opportunities for people to thrive.”

If selected as a Prize winner, Douglas County will receive a \$25,000 prize and a national platform to share their story and lessons learned with the country. The community will join with other national and community change leaders, including past Prize winners, through a national Prize Alumni Network.

To learn about the work of the 44 previous Prize winners, visit [www.rwjf.org/prize](http://www.rwjf.org/prize).

The RWJF Culture of Health Prize is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

A broad cross-section of community partners contributed to the writing of the Douglas County application, which highlights some of the key accomplishments of Douglas County organizations over the past several years.

### **About Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health**

Nationally accredited Lawrence-Douglas County Public Health has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 130 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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*Together, day by day, building a healthy community*  
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