

NEWS RELEASE
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Health Department receives \$75,000 grant to improve access to healthy foods in Douglas County

(Lawrence, KS) – The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has been awarded a three-year, \$75,000 grant through the Kansas Health Foundation’s Healthy Communities Initiative. The Health Department is one of 12 grantees in the state to receive funding.

The funding will be used to improve access to healthy foods in public spaces and worksites in Douglas County. The focus will be to foster the development of policies to improve the nutritional quality of foods available in places such as community buildings, recreation centers, swimming pools, libraries, health care facilities and places of employment. The initiative also will develop nutritional standards and guidelines so places can promote healthy food choices in vending machines, concession stands and cafeterias.

“I hear from people all of the time that they are making more health-conscious choices in the foods they and their children eat. The problem is these choices aren’t always available at the places we frequent most,” said Chris Tilden, Community Health director at the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. “We are fortunate to have the support of the Kansas Health Foundation to help us make progress.”

The Health Department will work in collaboration with LiveWell Lawrence, a coalition of nonprofits, businesses and individuals working to improve the health of Douglas County through policy and environmental changes.

Prior to applying for funding, all 12 communities participated in a yearlong planning process, during which they were asked to develop community action plans and identify specific policy, systems and environmental changes that would have the greatest impact for Kansas in the areas of healthy eating and active living. For Douglas County, those changes are outlined in the community’s first health plan, [“Roadmap to a Healthier Douglas County”](#), that was created through a community-wide collaborative effort coordinated by the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department. The plan was released in May.

“Proper nutrition and regular physical activity are key components to lowering the risk of chronic disease and increasing overall health,” said Steve Coen, president and CEO of the Kansas Health Foundation. “Through this initiative, we’re excited

to partner with organizations and communities across the state as they work to implement their plans meant to ensure that when it comes to healthy eating and active living for Kansans, the healthy choice is also the easy and accessible choice.”

For more information about Douglas County’s community health plan, please visit ldchealth.org or contact the Community Health program at 843-3060 or communityhealth@ldchealth.org.

About the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department

The Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department has served the Lawrence and Douglas County community for more than 120 years. Its mission is to advance policies, practices and programs that promote health for all, prevent disease and protect the environment.

About the Kansas Health Foundation

The Kansas Health Foundation is a private philanthropy based in Wichita, but statewide in its focus. Its mission is to improve the health of all Kansans. To learn more about the Foundation, please visit kansashealth.org.

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