



**Kane County  
Health Department**

September 15, 2016

Contact: Tom Schlueter (630) 444-3098

630-417-9729 (cell)

[www.kanehealth.com](http://www.kanehealth.com)

**Kane County Health Department recognized as HealthyCommunity50  
in Healthiest Cities and Counties Challenge**

*Grant dollars will 'give a voice' to local residents  
by Achieving Genuine Community Engagement*

The Kane County Health Department has been selected as one of 50 members of the HealthyCommunity50 in the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge to receive a \$10,000 community seed award. The Health Department is one of hundreds of entries selected to compete for up to \$500,000 in prizes. By participating in the Challenge, the Health Department is in the running to receive a prize that will support its local program: "Achieving Genuine Community Engagement."

The Challenge, a partnership between the Aetna Foundation, the American Public Health Association and the National Association of Counties, launched in April during National Public Health Week. The Challenge will award \$1.5 million in prizes to small and mid-sized cities, counties and federally-recognized tribes that are able to show measurable change over the course of several years working with cross-sector partnerships to implement health innovations and data-driven solutions. Hundreds of city governments, local municipalities, health departments, educational institutions and other public/private entities applied to be a part of the Challenge.

The HealthyCommunity50 were chosen based on plans to improve the health of their communities in at least one of five domains: Healthy behaviors, community safety, built environment, social/economic factors and environmental exposures.

(MORE)

Through the Challenge, the health department will focus on health equity by increasing community engagement. KCHD plans to use this award as an opportunity to better engage individual residents in a manner that provides them with a larger say and more authority over program and funding decisions; in other words, to “give them a voice.”

“Frequently, a small group of people make all the decisions in a community,” said Kane County Health Department Executive Director Barbara Jeffers. “We have a half-million unique individuals in Kane County, Illinois, and we are committed to giving everyone a voice.”

The Health Department will form three community councils, representing the northern, central and southern geographic regions of the county, to focus initially on the importance of nutrition and physical activity metrics. In time, the activities will develop into other areas of health concerns that would be selected by the council members. This deep engagement will allow programs to serve needs of the community more efficiently and effectively, improving overall performance.

“At the Aetna Foundation, we’re seeking to reward innovation for communities implementing new ways to improve health outcomes,” said Dr. Garth Graham, president of the Aetna Foundation. “We want the Healthiest Cities & Counties Challenge to serve as a catalyst for collaboration in local communities around the country working to move the needle in combating health disparities.”

All selected HealthyCommunity50 members will be visited by an expert judge panel to answer questions, understand the community’s approach to the project first-hand and speak with the members of the cross-sector team and key stakeholders. At the conclusion of the Challenge, the programs most able to show measurable change will be eligible for prize awards from \$25,000 - \$500,000. Participants will be judged on their own progress and will not be competing against each other.

More information, including a short video, is available at (KCHD website). You can follow the KCHD HealthyCommunities50 Challenge initiative using #GiveKaneAVoice. For more information about the challenge, please visit [www.healthiestcities.org](http://www.healthiestcities.org) or [www.kanehealth.com/challenge.htm](http://www.kanehealth.com/challenge.htm).

###