

Delaware General Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

NEW DELAWARE COUNTY WELLNESS COLLABORATIVE FOCUSES ON PREVENTING CHRONIC DISEASES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE, Oh., March 26, 2010 – The Delaware General Health District is adopting a new approach to preventing the chronic diseases that account for most deaths.

The new approach embraces “wellness.” It’s a comprehensive way of looking at the lifestyles and environmental factors that often determine why some people thrive well into their senior years, while others become sick and die prematurely.

“Wellness is looking at the whole person, not just one disease or just the heart or just smoking,” said Kelsey Kuhlman M.Ed., health educator with the Health District’s Assessment, Planning, and Education Division.

“Our program is focusing on wellness through achieving healthy workplaces, healthy eating, plenty of physical activity, and a tobacco-free future for everyone,” Kuhlman said. “We are re-energizing our community partners with this fresh focus on wellness.”

The wellness movement addresses most of the leading causes of death in one form or another. Healthy lifestyle habits – the cornerstone of wellness – are directly related to prevention of Cancer, Heart Disease, Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases, and Stroke, this area’s top four causes of death. Healthy habits also prevent Diabetes Mellitus, presently the 8th leading local cause of death and climbing charts throughout the United States. Diabetes and obesity often go hand-in-hand.

The Health District has organized the Delaware County Wellness Collaborative to oversee efforts to address these health threats. The Collaborative consists of four committees:

- The **Cardiovascular Health Coalition** (CVH), formed earlier under state cardiovascular prevention grants which the Health District no longer receives.
- The **Tobacco-Free Delaware County Coalition**, which has existed under differing names since the mid-1990s.
- The new **Worksite Wellness Committee**, focusing exclusively on encouraging healthy habits and policies at workplaces; and
- The **Delaware County Obesity Committee**, initiated in 2008 through the Partnership for Healthy Delaware County, is expanding into a broader-based collective to lead Delaware County in obesity prevention.

Each of the above coalitions will be meeting as needed and will be co-chaired by a Health district staff member and a community partner. Membership on all of the coalitions is open to interested residents as well as professionals working in related fields. Once a quarter, all four groups will convene as part of the Delaware County Wellness Collaborative.

Although Delaware County was recently ranked as Ohio's best for a number of Public Health measurements, the problems to be addressed by the Wellness Collaborative are considerable. According to the Ohio Department of Health's 2008 Healthy Ohio Community Profile, more than 28 percent of Delaware County residents are obese, and more than 36 percent are overweight. Nearly 24 percent smoke. And Cancer, the leading cause of death, claimed an average of 188 Delaware Countians' lives per year in 2004-06.

The Delaware County Wellness Collaborative's activities are being coordinated by Lori Kannally, Health Promotion Program Manager. To get involved or learn more, contact Kannally at 740-203-2029.