



# MEDIA RELEASE

Knox County Health Department

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Together! Healthy Knox Initiative Moving Forward** *Community Partnership and Leadership Team Take Shape*

After months of preparatory work by Knox County Health Department (KCHD) staff, the Together! Healthy Knox initiative has become a community group with a leadership team. A group of Knox County residents, made up of business people, community and faith leaders, government officials and others, sat together on October 7 in the Knoxville Police Department Training Academy on Carrick Street. Their mission: to take a community approach to better health. The main topic of discussion was their shared vision of health and quality of life for Knox County residents.

The Leadership Team overseeing Together! Healthy Knox has been working together since June. Many community members have already participated in surveys, focus groups or key informant interviews as part of a series of county health assessments conducted by KCHD, the groundwork for the Team's identification of priority health issues.

"The goal is to address our county's most pressing health issues in an inclusive and well-informed way," said Warren Sayre, physician clinical director of Integrated Health Services at Summit Medical Group and member of the Leadership Team. "That way, problems can be solved with the participation of the whole community — public sector, private sector and individuals — using accurate and current information."

KCHD launched Together! Healthy Knox in April 2009 to provide a framework for bringing together the individuals, groups and organizations involved in health and quality of life issues in the county, and to provide guidance for identifying and taking action on priority health issues. The initiative uses MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships), a strategic planning model developed by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

"MAPP focuses on community partnerships, and we are pleased and grateful to have a great variety of sectors represented on the leadership team," said Dr. Martha Buchanan, KCHD director and Leadership Team member. "It will take more than just the Health Department alone to bring about the kind of lasting change our community needs."

The Together! Healthy Knox Leadership Team members are:

- Marie Alcorn, Vice President of Community Engagement & Mobilization, United Way of Greater Knoxville
- Kristy Altman, Managing Director, Knoxville Track Club
- Martha Buchanan, MD, Director, KCHD
- Jim Decker, CEO, Medic Regional Blood Center
- Jim Dickson, CEO, YMCA of East Tennessee
- Paul Erwin, Director, UT Center for Public Health
- Mark Field, Senior Vice President of Membership, Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership
- Coral Getino, President, HoLa (Hora Latina)

- Carolyn Hansen, Clearinghouse Coordinator, Compassion Coalition
- Ben Harrington, Executive Director, Mental Health Association of East Tennessee
- Melissa Knight, Executive Director, Interfaith Health Clinic
- Jack Lacey, Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer, University of Tennessee Medical Center
- Aneisa McDonald, Coordinated School Health Specialist, Knox County Schools
- Gus Paidousis, Deputy Chief, Knoxville Police Department
- Karen Pershing, Executive Director, Metropolitan Drug Commission
- Madeline Rogero, Director, City of Knoxville Community Development
- Grant Rosenberg, Director, Knox County Community Development
- Warren Sayre, Physician Clinical Director of Integrated Health Services, Summit Medical Group
- Rosalyn Tillman, Assistant Dean, Pellissippi State Community College

Two health assessments have already been completed in Knox County as part of Together! Healthy Knox: one to provide a comprehensive snapshot of the health status of Knox County residents, and a second to find out what community members think about Knox County's health and quality of life. In order to complete these assessments, nine community focus groups were held, more than 3,200 surveys were completed and 27 key leaders were interviewed.

Plans are for two additional assessments to be completed during winter 2010/2011: one to look ahead and identify forces that could influence Knox County's health, and another to assess the availability of resources in Knox County to solve community and personal health issues. Once all four assessments are complete next spring, the Leadership Team will use the information to identify priority health issues and formulate an action plan for improving health in Knox County.

As they move through this planning process, Leadership Team members are optimistic about making lasting changes.

"The Chamber believes that the business community has an important role to play in health and quality of life, said Mark Field, Knoxville Area Chamber Partnership senior vice president of membership and member of the Leadership Team. "We feel this far-reaching partnership will be the key to the initiative's success in the long term."

For more information about Together! Healthy Knox and its Leadership Team, visit [www.healthyknox.org](http://www.healthyknox.org).

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