



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AWARDED ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION GRANT TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH THROUGH MULTI-SECTOR COLLABORATION**

*‘Data Across Sectors for Health’ Selects Health Department to Increase Community Capacity to Improve Health Through Data Sharing*

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) has been selected by DASH -- Data Across Sectors for Health -- as one of ten grantees to implement projects that improve health through multi-sector data sharing collaborations. DASH is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the nation’s largest philanthropy focused exclusively on health and health care.

Experts say that while most communities have some access to data from public health and health care systems, they lack important information on social determinants, such as transportation, housing, education and social services. These factors play a major role in contributing to individual and community health and wellbeing.

“Sharing data across sectors narrows knowledge gaps, increases collaboration, and ultimately improves community health, said Dr. Karen Hacker, ACHD Director. “In order for our community to see better health outcomes, we need more comprehensive data – including data that sheds light on the social determinants beyond clinical health care that influence our health.”

The work of the Health Department would not be possible without the joint efforts of the various sectors in our community. As part of this grant, we will be collaborating with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Allegheny County Economic Development, Carnegie Mellon Traffic21 Institute, Jewish Health Care Foundation, UPMC Health Plan, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health and the RAND Corporation as we join individual level data with geospatial and public health data to address cardiovascular disease in Allegheny County where inequalities exist.

DASH grantees will identify and test innovative practices that foster collaboration, engage across sectors and build robust data and information systems to increase capacity of organizations to improve health in their communities. Once data is collected, the Health Department will have a better understanding of cardio vascular disease in the County which will allow for testing of the impact of interventions. Multi-year grants were awarded in January, 2016 and will run through July, 2017.

“Data sharing across sectors increases the capacity of collaborations to understand the health of their community. When communities incorporate social determinant, clinical and public health data, they have more detailed information to make better decisions about programs and policies that affect health outcomes,” said Peter Eckart of the Illinois Public Health Institute, which administers DASH.

“Without collaboration between government and private and public organizations—including organizations that aren’t traditionally thought of in terms of health, we cannot have an accurate understanding of community health.”

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**About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are striving to build a national Culture of Health that will enable all to live longer, healthier lives now and for generations to come. For more information, visit [www.rwjf.org](http://www.rwjf.org). Follow the Foundation on Twitter at [www.rwjf.org/twitter](http://www.rwjf.org/twitter) or on Facebook at [www.rwjf.org/facebook](http://www.rwjf.org/facebook).

**About Data Across Sectors for Health**

As part of its multi-sector data and information system focus, RWJF launched DASH. DASH aims to identify barriers, opportunities, promising practices and indicators of progress for multi-sector collaborations to connect information systems and share data for community health improvement. The DASH National Program Office (NPO), led by the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) in partnership with the Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI) and with support from the Foundation, is responsible for leading DASH. To learn more, visit [www.DASHconnect.org](http://www.DASHconnect.org) or follow us at @DASH\_connect.

**About the Allegheny County Health Department**

In 2015, ACHD introduced a county-wide health improvement plan known as the Plan for a Healthier Allegheny (PHA). With chronic disease being one of the five priority areas identified in the plan, applying the strategies derived from the data produced as a result of this grant, will push us closer to our goals to improve the overall community health of the residents of Allegheny County. For more information about the PHA, visit <http://www.achd.net/pha/index.html>

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