



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Fitzgerald, Health Department Release Plan for a Healthier Allegheny**  
*Five-Year Plan Sets Forth Focus Areas, Goals and Strategies for Implementation*

**PITTSBURGH** – Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker today released the Department’s Plan for a Healthier Allegheny (PHA). The priorities were developed by the Health Department with the assistance of an advisory coalition with more than 70 organizational members and more than a year of data collection, analysis and community outreach.

“The PHA is our roadmap for a healthier county, and sets forth those priorities that will allow us to offer more in our county,” said County Executive Fitzgerald. “Not only has the Department identified where work is needed, but the PHA also contains measurable goals and strategies to reach those goals. We are grateful to the many partners in our community that will help the county implement this plan, and thank them for their support and willingness to help us improve the county’s health.”

The PHA focuses on five priority areas, which include, Access to Healthcare, Chronic Disease Health Risk Behaviors, Environment, Maternal and Child Health, and Mental Health and Substance Abuse. With each area, measurable goals are set forth and specific, actionable strategies to accomplish those goals are also part of the narrative. Most goal-specific baseline data was drawn from the Community Health Assessment (CHA) released by the Health Department last month. Additional data was provided by members of the advisory coalition, or other sources, depending on the indicator. The strategies will require broad community participation with the members of the coalition and all of our partners.

Each area includes a variety of topics on which the plan will focus. Access to Healthcare includes access to healthcare services, insurance, transportation and other related subjects. Chronic Disease Health Risk Behaviors will focus on obesity, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, smoking and tobacco use, and other health issues that put individuals at greater risk of chronic disease. Environment encompasses air quality, water quality, and unconventional oil and gas production as a starting point. Maternal and Child Health will look at topics including asthma, breastfeeding, infant mortality, and low birth weight. The final area, Mental Health and Substance Abuse, will address depression, drug and alcohol use, and the integration of mental health into physical health.

“Plan for a Healthier Allegheny is a living document that will help guide us toward our future goals. Success requires a collective approach that includes the continued commitment of our Advisory Coalition and broader countywide community participation,” said Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker. “Allegheny County can become the healthiest County in the United States if we all work together.”

Three representatives of the advisory coalition also joined in today’s announcement and shared their thoughts on the importance of the PHA to the County, and their respective communities. Dr. Ellen Stewart of the Board of Health also provided brief comments on the process. Susan Kalson of the Squirrel Hill Health Center, Barry Adams of the Port Authority of Allegheny County, and Gretchen North of

the YMCA spoke on behalf of the 70-plus members of the advisory coalition which participated in this process. Dr. Linda Lane, Superintendent of Pittsburgh Public Schools, was also in attendance at the event.

“On behalf of the Board of Health, we’d like to congratulate Dr. Hacker, her team and the advisory coalition on this significant accomplishment,” said Chair, Dr. Lee Harrison, M.D. “We look forward to its implementation and the positive effects it is sure to have on the residents of Allegheny County. The Board fully supports Dr. Hacker and her Health Department staff in this important effort.”

Other coalition members represent a cross-sectorial membership that ranges from health care to foundations, to other county and city agencies, to businesses including, but not limited to, Allegheny Health Network, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, Allies for Children, Clean Water Action, Gay and Lesbian Community Center, Giant Eagle, Heinz Endowments, Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Ohio Valley Hospital, Pittsburgh Public Schools, UPMC, UPMC Health Plan, and the Urban League of Pittsburgh. A complete list of the 70-plus member advisory coalition is available at [www.achd.net/cha/index.html](http://www.achd.net/cha/index.html).

“UPMC Health Plan is privileged to participate as a community stakeholder in the ACHD planning for Allegheny County’s first Plan for a Healthier Allegheny and Community Health Needs Assessment,” said John Lovelace, President of UPMC *for You*. “As we undertake our own UPMC hospital-based Community Needs Assessment, we will incorporate many elements of the PHA into our thinking about how UPMC can fulfill its role of improving the health in the communities we serve.”

Over the next few months, Dr. Hacker and the Health Department will also convene a series of meetings to introduce community members to the PHA, celebrate this collaborative accomplishment, and invite them to participate in its implementation. The first three meetings have been scheduled and are as follows:

Monday, June 22, 2015 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Homewood-Brushston YMCA 7140 Bennett Street Pittsburgh, PA 15208	Tuesday, July 7, 2015 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Bariel Family YMCA 2565 Nicholson Road Sewickley, PA 15143	Monday, July 27, 2015 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Thelma Lovette YMCA 2114 Centre Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15219
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"The Allegheny County Health Department Advisory Coalition has led a dynamic, constructive approach to addressing the comprehensive health needs of our community. Allegheny Health Network is proud to participate in this important collaboration and looks forward to working with the Health Department and other coalition partners to improve the health and well-being of those who live and work in the county," said Tony Farah, MD, Allegheny Health Network Chief Medical Officer.

In addition to guiding future services, programs, and policies for public health-serving agencies and the area overall, the PHA (which is the county’s community health improvement plan) is required for accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Accreditation is being sought by the Health Department, indicating that the agency is meeting national standards for public health system performance.

The Plan for a Healthier Allegheny can be found in its entirety on the Health Department website [www.achd.net](http://www.achd.net).

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