



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Health Dept. Supports Campaign to Raise Awareness about Diabetes**  
*American Diabetes Month in November Focuses Attention on Major Public Health Issue*

**PITTSBURGH** – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is joining with the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and other organizations to emphasize the seriousness of diabetes and the importance of prevention and management of the disease during American Diabetes Month in November.

Around 11% of Allegheny County residents have been diagnosed with diabetes. Nationally, over 29 million children and adults have diabetes and an additional 86 million are at high risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Recent estimates project that as many as one in three American adults will have diabetes by 2050, unless measures are taken to reduce risk factors for the disease.

To focus attention on this major health issue, the local chapter of the American Diabetes Association is holding its annual EXPO on Saturday, November 8, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh. Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department and Rich Fitzgerald, Allegheny County Executive, will address attendees of this free event at 10:00 a.m. The EXPO, a *Live Well Allegheny* event, will feature free health screenings, cooking demonstrations and a wealth of information, fun and engaging activities for families and children.

“There are a growing number of individuals with diabetes or pre-diabetes in this country. Diabetes and the development of diabetes are major public health issues. But diabetes can be prevented and given the known relationship between diabetes Type 2 and obesity, we know that efforts to prevent obesity and encourage healthy lifestyles can help to decrease the incidence of the disease. For those who have diabetes or are at risk for diabetes, the EXPO is an invaluable way to learn more about lifestyle changes to manage or prevent the disease. Forthcoming *Live Well Allegheny* events will offer additional opportunities for activities or education that promote healthy living,” said Dr. Hacker.

This year’s EXPO will feature Rufus Dorsey, an actor, writer, and fitness coach who is living with diabetes, and Jennifer Antkowiak, a local celebrity whose roles include author, caregiver advocate, fitness instructor and TV news anchor. Making a popular reappearance is Divabetics, an innovative program that combines pampering, music and games with diabetes education for women. Divabetics is the brainchild of Max Szadek, former personal assistant to the late singer Luther Vandross, who had diabetes and succumbed to complications from a stroke in 2005.

Diabetes is a chronic disease which requires regular care. Lack of management can lead to heart attacks, strokes, amputation, blindness, kidney failure and nerve damage. But there is good news: diabetes complications can be prevented or delayed by properly managing blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Eating healthy with an emphasis on vegetables and fruit, being physically active, and quitting smoking also can help lower the risk of diabetes complications.

*Live Well Allegheny* is a county-wide, coordinated initiative to improve the health of everyone living or working in Allegheny County. Its website, <http://www.livewellallegheny.com/>, highlights events, programs,

and resources that promote wellness activities throughout the county. Additionally, the Health Department offers materials to assist people with diabetes in their efforts to manage the disease, which are available to download at <http://www.achd.net/mainstart.html> or by calling **412-687-ACHD (2243)**.

For more information about the November 8 American Diabetes Association EXPO, please call **412-824-1181, ext. 4608** or visit <http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/diabetes-expos/pittsburgh/>

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