



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 6, 2016

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Health Department Opens Recruitment for Violence Prevention Program

PITTSBURGH – The Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) is asking the public join them in the fight against gun violence. After receiving a grant from Heinz Endowments earlier this year, the department has launched its Office of Violence Prevention. As part of this effort, ACHD is asking individuals, especially those in the communities most affected by gun violence, to apply for the Violence Prevention Community Advisory Board.

The Violence Prevention Community Advisory Board will consist of a select group of 25 people convened by the Health Department's Office of Violence Prevention. The board will assist ACHD in developing public health approaches, data-driven strategies and collaborations to best serve the residents in the areas with the highest activity of gun violence. Members are being recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, including workforce development, government, media, social services as well as community residents who are committed to addressing the issue. To learn more visit, <http://www.achd.net/commhealth/advisoryboard.html>.

"Gun violence and its aftermath is a public health problem disproportionately impacting some of our communities and it requires a community approach to solve," said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. "It is critically important to engage community members as members of the Advisory Board to help craft the solutions."

The public health approach focuses on populations and communities rather than individuals, and on prevention rather than intervention. It takes a system approach and necessitates engagement across a broad group of stakeholders. In essence, such an approach assumes that street violence is similar to an infectious disease outbreak and that it can be prevented if the contributing risk factors are understood. That approach then allows for intervention with culturally-appropriate, evidence-based strategies.

To view the requirements and submit your application to join the Violence Prevention Community Advisory Board, go to <http://www.achd.net/commhealth/apply.html>.

In 2014, the homicide rate in the United States was 4.5 per 100,000, while the rate in Allegheny County was 8.5 per 100,000. The homicide rate in Allegheny County in 2015 was 9.3 per 100,000. The Health Department has carefully selected program strategies that are rooted in evidence that demonstrate measurable effects on violence, which allow for action now.

To learn more about the Health Department's Office of Violence Prevention, visit <http://www.achd.net/commhealth/index.html> or call 412-247-7969.

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