For immediate release:
May 5, 2015

University of Illinois, College of Medicine at Rockford, the Stephenson County Health Department, the Carroll County Health Department and the Freeport Health Network Hospital awarded federal grant

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (USDHHS/HRSA), Federal Office of Rural Health Policy has awarded a 3 year $600,000 grant to the Stephenson and Carroll County Health Living Project.

The Stephenson and Carroll County Healthy Living Project is a collaborative program among four partners: 1) the Stephenson County Health Department; 2) the Carroll County Health Department (S&CDH); 3) the FHN Hospital, Freeport, IL (FHN); and 4) the National Center for Rural Health Professions and Department of Family and Community Medicine (UICOM-R) at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford. The goal of the project is to promote healthy lifestyles to reduce obesity and chronic disease risk for adult men and women living in rural Stephenson and Carroll counties in Illinois.

According to the 2015 Community Health Rankings, 31% of Carroll County adults and 27% of Stephenson County adults were obese. In addition 26% and 27% of Carroll and Stephenson County adults are physically inactive. Additionally, residents in these counties have limited access to physical activity and healthy foods. “I am very excited about this program, which will help us mentor people with a very simple approach to losing weight and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Physical inactivity and excess weight are high risk factors for heart disease and other issues, including high blood pressure, certain types of cancers, and diabetes. With this grant, we can educate people to balance increased physical activity against their food intake in an effort to help them to lose weight and have healthier lifestyles.” Craig Beintema, Public Health Administrator, Stephenson County Health Department.

This project was based on community input from the following community needs assessments: 1) FHN Community Health Needs Assessment; 2) Stephenson County Illinois Project for Local Assessment of Needs (IPLAN); 3) Carroll County IPLAN; 4) Input from the Freeport Community Action Group; and 5) We Choose Health – Community Transformation Grant in Stephenson and Carroll counties.

By implementing this program, it is expected that participants’ awareness and knowledge regarding obesity, chronic disease and its relationship to physical activity, healthy eating and lifestyle behavior change will increase. Additionally, expected outcomes include: increased physical activity, increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and in the long-term reduced BMI in the participants.
For more information, please contact Manorama Khare, PhD, University of Illinois, College of Medicine at Rockford at: mkhare1@uic.edu or Craig Beintema, Public Health Administrator, Stephenson County Health Department at: craig.beintema@aeroinc.net.

************************************************************************