



news release

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The Wellmark Foundation Funds Two Health Improvement Projects in Iowa

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Wellmark Foundation funded two health improvement grants in Iowa totaling \$243,558 at its recent board of directors meeting. The ***Growing Up LEAN: Living to be Energetic, Active, & Nutrition Grant Program*** supports childhood obesity prevention projects, while the ***Healthy Communities Grant Program: Supporting a Culture of Wellness and Prevention*** is designed for community-based wellness and prevention projects. All awards are two-year grants unless otherwise noted. Organizations receiving grants in these two new grant programs include:

Growing Up LEAN: Living to be Energetic, Active, & Nutrition Grant Program

- The Burgess Foundation in Onawa received a \$93,558 grant to implement a childhood obesity prevention project in Monona County. The project will promote lifelong physical activity and healthy habits among children through community capacity-building, policy, youth programming and family programming. Plans include working with the school board to approve new policies, training volunteer staff to supervise before and after school use of fitness equipment, and implementing family activities including mini-health fairs and family fun nights.

Healthy Communities Grant Program: Supporting a Culture of Wellness and Prevention

- The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) was awarded a twenty-two-month \$150,000 grant to create a statewide health data warehouse. The warehouse will collect, organize and disseminate important health information from multiple sources across Iowa. A 2007 capacity-building grant from the Foundation supported establishment of a user-group as part of the research phase in the warehouse development plan. The warehouse will provide local public health partners and other stakeholders with online, interactive access to health data, which they will use to conduct evidence-based needs assessments and to identify health priorities and prevention targets in their communities.

The Wellmark Foundation has provided nearly \$16.3 million to fund 412 health-related grants in Iowa and South Dakota since 1997, including \$593,558 this cycle. “The Wellmark Foundation works to improve the health of Iowans and South Dakotans,” says Matthew McGarvey, director

of The Wellmark Foundation. “These are strong and active grantee organizations that have great influence in their communities. These comprehensive projects will positively impact the health of thousands of Iowans,” says McGarvey.

The Wellmark Foundation is a private, non-profit foundation created by Wellmark, Inc., doing business as Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Iowa. The ***Growing Up LEAN: Living to be Energetic, Active, & Nutrition Grant Program*** supporting childhood obesity prevention projects has an application deadline of April 21, 2009. The deadline for the ***Healthy Communities Grant Program: Supporting a Culture of Wellness and Prevention*** supporting community-based wellness and prevention projects is September 3, 2009. Visit The Wellmark Foundation's Web site at www.wellmark.com/foundation for grant application instructions. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and The Wellmark Foundation are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.