



news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mar. 3, 2009

CONTACT:

Kevin Teale
Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield
636 Grand Avenue, Station 111
Des Moines, Iowa 50309
Phone: (515) 248-5683
E-mail: tealek@wellmark.com

The Wellmark Foundation Funds Three Health Improvement Projects in South Dakota

(Des Moines, Iowa) – The Wellmark Foundation funded three health improvement grants in South Dakota totaling \$350,000 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

- Youth & Family Services, Inc. (YFS) in Rapid City, S.D., received a \$150,000 grant to implement and expand a childhood obesity prevention program targeting 2,000 children in western South Dakota. The project will utilize the evidence-based childhood obesity prevention approach, *I Am Moving, I am Learning*, which has been used effectively in more than 100 Head Start programs nationally since 2006.

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

- The Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas (CHAD) in Sioux Falls, S.D., received a \$150,000 grant to implement a preventive oral health program. The program will target 600 individuals by hosting the Delta Dental's Dakota Smiles mobile dental program at 24 clinics in three underserved Community Health Center (CHC) service areas. Services provided will include oral health education to patients, outreach activities in the communities, tobacco cessation counseling and training CHC clinical staff on basic oral health techniques.
- Catholic Social Services in Rapid City, S.D., will use a \$50,000 grant to support a wellness and prevention curriculum for elementary students living on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations in South Dakota. The culturally specific curriculum will teach 800-1000 elementary students how to live a healthy lifestyle based on their Lakota tradition. The program will also offer knowledge and resources on how to resist peer pressure, abstain from substance abuse and avoid violence. This

Wellmark Foundation grant will provide matching funds to leverage a four-year, \$330,284 Local Funding Partnerships grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and a three-year, \$210,213 grant from The Bush Foundation supporting this program.

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 South Dakotans,” 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.