



## WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

### For Immediate Release

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News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.

### RENEWED FOCUS CRITICAL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH GROWTH

**JOLIET** – Most of us take public health for granted, but all Americans reap significant benefits from public health achievements realized since 1900.

Children born during 2009 can expect to live 40 years longer than those born at the turn of the 20th century. Babies delivered in 1900 did well to celebrate their 50th birthday, but that has all changed thanks to public health innovations impacting the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe.

Modern immunizations and the creation of tobacco-free spaces also help us to live healthier, but much more still needs to be done. Growing obesity rates, diabetes, asthma, bioterrorism preparedness, and a growing incidence of preventable injuries are just some of the areas in need of special attention. Addressing these problems requires a renewed public health focus, and National Public Health Week (April 6-12), is designed to advocate for just that.

The Will County Health Department is one of more than 50,000 agencies and organizations affiliated with the American Public Health Association, which championed the creation of National Public Health Week in 1995. The week-long event recognizes contributions credited to public health and creates community awareness needed to build a healthier nation.

Despite our best efforts, the reality is that Americans are not as healthy as they should be. Although we spend more on health care than any other country, our nation is falling behind in many important measures of what it means to be healthy.

As we prepare for the 15<sup>th</sup> annual National Public Health Week event, consider that the U.S. ranks just 46<sup>th</sup> in life expectancy and near the bottom of the barrel in infant mortality. We need to allocate resources that can be used to make America even a healthier place in which to live and work.

Public health dollars included in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will help, but even more will be required to make a real difference. If you believe that communities must have new resources to implement programs targeting the health needs of their residents, now is the time to act. The WCHD encourages everyone to become more familiar with public health issues impacting all of our lives. For more information about the need for a renewed public health focus, visit [www.apha.org](http://www.apha.org). For more information about programs and services available through the Will County Health Department, visit [www.willcountyhealth.org](http://www.willcountyhealth.org).

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