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GALLATIN CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Gallatin City-County Health Department Awarded National Accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board

Recognized Among Highest Performing Health Departments in the Nation

For Immediate Release

BOZEMAN, MT — May 14, 2015 — The Gallatin City-County Health Department this week achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Fewer than 100 local health departments in the nation have achieved national accreditation, a process designed to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing the quality and performance of Tribal, state, local, and territorial public health departments.

“We set out nearly three years ago to measure ourselves against standards set by some of the best health departments in the nation,” said Matt Kelley, MPH, Health Officer for the Gallatin City-County Health Department. “This achievement is a testament to our talented and passionate staff, and a validation that our hard work and energy is helping to improve the health and quality of life in Gallatin County.”

“The accreditation process helps to ensure that the programs and services we provide are as responsive as possible to the needs of our community. With accreditation the Gallatin City-County Health Department is demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to the public, funders, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work.”

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation’s more than 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

“Accreditation means that the Gallatin City-County Health Department has gone through a rigorous process to determine that our services and systems meet or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health,” Kelley said. “By continuing to improve our services and performance, we can be sure we are meeting the public health needs of those we serve as effectively as possible.”



Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

Kelley said the Department and Gallatin City-County Board of Health, which oversees the department, decided to pursue accreditation three years ago because the rigor and breadth of the standards would be crucial to address the county's most pressing health needs. Those priorities, identified through a comprehensive community assessment process, has led to work to address the high percentage of residents who lack health insurance, connect residents to mental health services, raise awareness of substance abuse, and help to manage growth to assure the health of the state's fastest growing population center.

"Gallatin City-County Health Department joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission," said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. "The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community."

The national accreditation program was created collaboratively over a 10-year period by hundreds of public health practitioners working at the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Since the program's launch in September 2011, hundreds of public health departments have applied to PHAB for accreditation, and hundreds of public health practitioners from across the nation have been trained to serve as volunteer peer site visitors for the program.

"Achieving accreditation indicates that Gallatin City-County Health Department is dedicated to improving and protecting the health of the community by striving to continuously improve the quality of the services it delivers," said Leslie M. Beitsch, MD, JD, chair of PHAB's Board of Directors and chair of the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Social Medicine at Florida State University College of Medicine. "Accreditation also promotes consistency in meeting standards. With an ever-increasing number of health departments now applying for and becoming accredited, you will be able to expect to receive the same quality of public health services wherever you go in the United States."

Gallatin City-County Health Department provides an array of public services and wellness resources, including communicable disease prevention and control, maternal and child health services, emergency preparedness, immunizations, and nutrition services through the Women's Infants & Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program. The department's Environmental Health Division works to protect and improve Gallatin County's food, water, and air quality through programs designed to enforce public health laws and work collaboratively with



residents to assure healthy practices in wastewater treatment and food handling practices in restaurants, bars, hotels/motels, and other public establishments.

About the Public Health Accreditation Board

The Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), established in 2007, was created to serve as the national public health accrediting body, and is jointly funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The development of national public health accreditation has involved, and is supported by, public health leaders and practitioners from the national, Tribal, state, and local levels. Learn more about PHAB or sign up for the PHAB e-newsletter by visiting www.phaboard.org.

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For more information, or to schedule an interview with Matt Kelley please call at 582-3100.

