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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Northern Illinois Public Health Departments  
Celebrate National Public Health Week (NPHW) April 3-9, 2017  
Healthiest Nation in One Generation by - 2030**

Public health promotes and protects the health of people and the communities where they live, learn, work and play. Public health is like an invisible shield that protects you against disease outbreaks from food, water, and poor hygiene; informing and supporting choices around healthy eating, active living and smoke-free living; supporting behavioral health; and protecting the most vulnerable through vaccinations. April 3-9, 2017 is National Public Health Week, a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving the health of our nation.

In collaboration with the state, Rockford Region health departments will be highlighting programs to be featured daily throughout NPHW:

Monday: The Value of Public Health. Those working in public health prevent people from getting sick or injured by using data regarding health issues and trends to solve problems, set policy, and promote positive health outcomes. Jo Daviess County will be hosting a community health engagement event for all county residents.

Tuesday: Infectious Disease and Communicable Disease. Public Health works to prevent infectious disease throughout the counties. Local health departments will continue to keep residents aware of communicable and vector borne infectious diseases. Winnebago County health department has been facilitating classes for food permit holders to inform them about the changes to the food code. These classes will help our communities maintain safe food and drinking standards.

Wednesday: Chronic Disease. Rockford Region health departments promote the Illinois Tobacco Quitline to encourage smoke free lifestyles while also promoting a balanced lifestyle to include exercising, maintaining a healthy weight and maintaining mindfulness. DeKalb County health department will be hosting a lunch and learn for all employees to include the importance of maintaining a well-balanced lifestyle.

Thursday: Behavioral Health. A behavioral and mental health issue that Illinois and the nation face is the opioid epidemic. There are many factors that affect mental health behaviors including health disparities. Boone County will be coordinating a poverty simulation event in April to inform community members about these factors that community members are faced with.

Friday: Immunizations. Public Health supports the importance of immunizations. Local health departments around the area provide immunizations to protect communities from measles, mumps, whooping cough, the flu, and many more diseases. During NPHW, Ogle County will be offering discounted flu shots to Ogle County residents. Whiteside County Health Department will be hosting a community event later in the month to discuss the importance of vaccination among children and adults.

Throughout the week, all county health departments will be featuring their county health department programs on social media and community members are encouraged to find out more about the programs and events in their county. Please be sure to follow your local health department on social media.

The Winnebago County Health Department is part of the Illinois Department of Public Health Region 1 in Northern Illinois. Members include the County Health Departments of the Boone, Carroll, DeKalb, Jo Daviess, Lee, Ogle, Stephenson, and Whiteside. These departments are collectively promoting the importance of National Public Health Week. For more information on the Winnebago County Health Department visit our website at [www.wchd.org](http://www.wchd.org). Like us: on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), or, contact us at 815-720-4000.