

Local Team Participates in Public Health Leadership Program

Grand Rapids, MI – A West Michigan group of leaders has been selected to participate in the National Leadership Academy for the Public’s Health (NLAPH) program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). NLAPH is a national program focused on improving population health by working with multi-sector leadership teams and training the teams through an applied, team-based collaborative leadership development model. The program is implemented by the Center for Health Leadership and Practice (CHLP), a center of the Public Health Institute (PHI), and will provide training and support for a period of one year.

“This program will impart population health teams with the skills to lead across sectors and collaboratively solve complex population health problems in innovative ways,” said Carmen Rita Nevarez MD, MPH, Vice President for External Relations and CHLP’s Director. “These are the types of leaders who will ultimately be able to drive critical efforts, such as the adoption of evidence-based policies and practices at the community level, which can have a tangible impact on health outcomes.”

The West Michigan team, consisting of Mary Boyd, Vice President of Regional Network and System Development for Trinity Health, West Michigan, Wayman Britt, Assistant County Administrator for Kent County, Joyce S. Lee, FAIA, LEED AP, formerly Chief Architect at the New York City Office of Management & Budget, and Brad Thomas, CEO of Progressive AE will work on an applied health leadership project that tackles an important population health issue with the goal of improving public health outcomes. The team will focus on built environment improvements to support behavioral changes at the personal and community level. The implementation will expand on successes to increase access to physical activity and

healthy foods. The primary focus of the team will be Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa Counties and includes representation from private industry, local government, professional trades, and health care.

“As an employer, rising health care costs and insurance, coupled with the increase in obesity, heart disease, and other critical health issues that can be reduced through lifestyle choices, is something we need to address with a systems approach,” said Bradley Thomas, P.E., CEO of Progressive AE. “I look forward to working with this extraordinary group of people in a cross sector collaboration to identify solutions and precipitate change.”

"At the end of the year, we hope our collaborative efforts result in meaningful enhancements in public health in our regions and across the state," said Joyce Lee, FAIA, LEED AP, team leader and founder and chair of the local Green Health Committee.

NLAPH will provide training and support to assist the team. Training and support will focus on two tracks: the development of leadership skills, including personal and collaborative leadership in a multi-sector environment; and an emphasis on growth from team-based collaborative work to policy and systems change. NLAPH is provided at no cost to the participants or the community.