

NEWS RELEASE

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Greater Flint Health Coalition Announces Strategy & Action Plan to Address Genesee County Community's Poor Health Behaviors

Embargoed until 11:00 a.m.

- ***Plan includes a major multi-media health improvement campaign***
- ***Focuses on improvement in health behaviors and health outcomes***

(FLINT, MICHIGAN – APRIL 6, 2011) The Greater Flint Health Coalition (GFHC) and its partners, which include the City of Flint, Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Genesee County Medical Society, today announced at a press conference a “County Health Rankings Action Plan”. Flint Mayor Dayne Walling and Genesee County Treasurer Deb Cherry participated in the event.

The “County Health Rankings Action Plan” was collaboratively developed by the Greater Flint Health Coalition in response to the national *County Health Rankings* study conducted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It outlines a series of short and long-term strategies to address Flint and Genesee County’s health rankings, with a special emphasis on improvement in the areas of Health Behaviors and Health Outcomes in Genesee County. Currently among the unhealthiest counties in Michigan, Genesee County’s overall Health Outcomes rank 77th of 82 counties, while Health Behaviors (which include diet and physical activity) rank 82nd of 82 counties.

The *County Health Rankings* show us that where we live matters to our health. The health of a community depends on many different factors – ranging from individual health behaviors, education and jobs, to quality of health care, to the environment. This collection of 50 reports – one per state, with detail on each county – helps a cross-section of community leaders see that where we live, learn, work, and play influences how healthy we are and how long we live. The Greater Flint Health Coalition has used this information to generate an action plan and secure community-wide commitments to address the county’s most significant health challenges.

GFHC also announced a major multi-media health improvement campaign, “Commit to Fit” as the first component of the County Health Rankings Action Plan. The campaign will kick off in May.

Press conference speakers included Kirk Smith, President & CEO, Greater Flint Health Coalition; Deborah Cherry, Chair, Greater Flint Health Coalition; Dr. Michael Boucree, Genesee County Medical Society; Duane Miller, Executive Vice President, Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce; and Flint Mayor Dayne Walling.

“The *County Health Rankings* study has provided a consolidated look into our community’s health status, including the root causes behind our poor health status,” Smith said. “Our focus with this Action Plan is to work together to address issues related to preventable health conditions by providing a stimulating environment supported by the commitment of a broad-base of community leaders and committed citizens.”

“The impact we can have by being conscious of our health behaviors – things like physical activity, diet or smoking – can be significant to changing our personal health as well as the health of the community,” stated

Cherry, Chairperson of the GFHC. “The upcoming *Commit to Fit* campaign will be a way to keep this challenge in front of us, by spreading a positive message that will help our citizens learn and grow as we transform Genesee County into a healthy community.”

“Good health is good business,” said Tim Herman, CEO of the Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce. “The workplace is an important environment for reaching adults with nutrition and fitness programs that prevent or manage chronic disease among employees. This not only helps improve health behaviors, but comprehensive health programs can also help reduce healthcare costs, improve employee productivity and increase business efficiency.”

The Greater Flint Health Coalition is a Flint, Michigan based nonprofit health coalition whose two-fold mission is to improve the health status of Genesee County residents and the quality and cost effectiveness of the health care delivery system in the community. For more on the Greater Flint Health Coalition, including links to the full “County Health Rankings Action Plan,” visit <http://www.gfhc.org>.

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