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NICHQ launches "Collaborate for Healthy Weight"

September 14, 2011

Healthcare professionals from coast-to-coast gather in Washington, DC, during National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

BOSTON, Mass., Sept. 14, 2011 – The National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality (NICHQ) today announced the kick-off of "Collaborate for Healthy Weight," a national effort to create multi-faceted, community-based projects to address obesity through innovative partnerships among public health, primary care, and community-based organizations. Teams from ten communities have been selected to participate in a national collaborative, which is holding its first Learning Session in Washington, DC, from Sept. 14 - Sept. 16 in conjunction with National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. Teams from Boston to San Diego are meeting with national experts, exchanging ideas, and creating plans for becoming national best practice models. Howard K. Koh, MD, MPH, Assistant Secretary of Health for the US Department of Health and Human Services, and Mary Wakefield, PhD, RN, Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), are delivering opening remarks.

"Through the Collaborate for Healthy Weight initiative we are taking action to change the conversation in our communities about how we eat, move, and grow and buy our food," said Koh. "I am optimistic that these strategies will help to address the critical public health issues associated with obesity. By working together, we will create a healthier society where everyone can enjoy the gift of health."

"Collaborate for Healthy Weight" is a two-phased project supported through the Public Health and Prevention Fund under the Affordable Care Act and made possible by a grant from HRSA. NICHQ is leading a coalition of partner organizations that are managing all program logistics and overseeing the work of participating teams. In Phase Two of the project, NICHQ will select and manage an additional 40 teams to broaden the reach of the program.

The ten teams participating in Phase One will break new ground by working collaboratively across primary care, public health, and community-based arenas to identify and test new ideas for improving obesity prevention and treatment and addressing health equity issues.

The Phase One "Collaborate for Healthy Weight" teams are:

- Arkansas -- ARcare
- California -- San Diego Healthy Weight Collaborative
- Florida -- Community Health Improvement Partnership
- Massachusetts -- Boston Area Collaborative for Health
- Missouri -- Greater Kansas City Obesity Collaborative
- Montana -- Healthy by Design Quality Collaborative
- New York -- Greater Rochester Obesity Collaborative
- Ohio -- Ohio Healthy Weight Outcome Coalition
- Virginia -- St. Charles Health Council
- Washington -- Lincoln County Health Department

"Collaborate for Healthy Weight is a unique initiative that fosters innovative local partnerships across the nation to make a real difference in the battle against obesity and health inequity," Wakefield said. "We look forward to spreading the ideas generated through these projects to other communities throughout the country."

"NICHQ has been working on obesity issues for more than a decade," said Charles Homer, MD, MPH, NICHQ's President and CEO. "We are extremely excited about the potential for this program to develop new breakthrough strategies for addressing obesity, and we are grateful to HRSA for its leadership and support as we work with our many partners to combat this serious public health problem."

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