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**WILLIAMSON COUNTY SELECTED FOR NATIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE; ACHIEVE
INITIATIVE FUELS COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO COMBAT
OBESITY AND CHRONIC DISEASES**

One of 43 Communities Named Across the U.S.

(WILLIAMSON COUNTY, MARCH 26, 2009) – The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) announced that Williamson County has been selected to become part of the Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental ChangE (ACHIEVE) initiative. Williamson County is one of 13 U.S. communities that have been selected in 11 states by NACDD to advance community leadership in the nation’s efforts to prevent chronic diseases and related risk factors through a locally collaborative approach. ACHIEVE is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s Healthy Communities Program.

“The NACDD is pleased to partner with Williamson County to support the ACHIEVE Initiative”, said John Robitscher, Executive Director of NACDD. “Promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting healthy communities will help us meet our goal of reducing chronic diseases. Through community collaboration, we can create a synergy that assists people in making healthy choices where they live, work and play.”

Williamson County and Cities Health District applied for this program and was selected after a competitive review process. The program will focus on reducing cardiovascular disease in Georgetown and surrounding rural communities in Williamson County. These areas were chosen due to knowledge of previous assessments including the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, Youth Activity Weight and Nutrition Survey, and the Texas Department of State Health Services’ Heart and Stroke Healthy City Recognition Program. ACHIEVE will provide the opportunity to learn from past assessments and develop strong change strategies that will lead to a healthier community. “We are very excited to have the opportunity to work with Georgetown and the surrounding rural communities on this national effort to reduce chronic diseases”, said Cynthia Guerrero, Director of Community Health Education and Social Services Division, Williamson County and Cities Health District.

The Williamson County ACHIEVE Initiative will be implemented by a Coalition comprised of community leaders and stakeholders. Williamson County Board of Health Member and Georgetown

resident Kerry Russell said “the City of Georgetown is pleased to join with the Williamson County and Cities Health District in this initiative to address the long term health needs of the area through this grass roots approach to assist area residents in developing sound preventive health habits.”

ACHIEVE is an innovative approach that brings together all sectors of a community to spur policy change toward prevention of chronic diseases. The purpose of ACHIEVE is to bring together local leaders and stakeholders to build healthier communities by promoting policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that focus on physical activity, nutrition, tobacco cessation, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The 2009 ACHIEVE communities will build on the successes learned in the 2008 ACHIEVE pilot communities. The ACHIEVE approach aims to promote improvements such as increased access to and use of attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; revised school food contracts that include more fruits and vegetables and whole grain foods; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly, among others.

NACDD, the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) all partnered to fund 43 communities in 21 states to become part of ACHIEVE, an aggressive social movement that is mobilizing leaders in local communities to respond to the public health challenge of obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition. For a complete listing of all funded communities, please visit the ACHIEVE Web site at www.achievecommunities.org or CDC’s Healthy Communities Program’s Web site at: www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram.

For more information on the Williamson County and Cities Health District visit www.wcchd.org.