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**Portsmouth Selected for National Health & Wellness Initiative –
ACHIEVE – to Promote Healthy Communities**

Portsmouth, VA (February 23, 2010) – The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) announced that Portsmouth has been selected to become part of **Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental ChangE**, ACHIEVE. Portsmouth is one of 10 U.S. communities in nine states and one territory that NACDD has selected to advance community leadership in the nation’s efforts to prevent chronic diseases and related risk-factors through a local collaborative approach. ACHIEVE is supported by the Healthy Communities Program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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

The Consortium for Infant and Child Health at Eastern Virginia Medical School (CINCH), a community child health coalition, applied for this program on behalf of area partners and was selected after a competitive review process. CINCH, Portsmouth Health Department, Portsmouth YMCA, and the Office of the Portsmouth City Manager collaborated on the ACHIEVE grant submission. These organizations, together with Portsmouth Public Schools,

the Department of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services, the Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation, Portsmouth Redevelopment & Housing Authority, and WHRO Center for Regional Citizenship, comprise the core planning team that will develop and implement positive change for a healthier city during the three-year program.

CINCH will manage the grant on behalf of the city and ACHIEVE partners. “CINCH is honored to be awarded the ACHIEVE grant on behalf of Portsmouth”, said Amy Paulson, CINCH Director. “ACHIEVE focuses on setting the right stage for healthy behaviors like avoiding tobacco exposure and increasing healthy eating and physical activity. Everyone in Portsmouth will benefit from ACHIEVE. This is a fantastic opportunity to create a healthier community.”

“The City is among a select few localities around the country that have the will and commitment to bring about positive change. We are excited about the collaboration and ready to get to work with our partners,” said Brannon Godfrey, Portsmouth Deputy City Manager.

ACHIEVE is an innovative approach that brings together local leaders and stakeholders in all sectors of a community 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 2010 ACHIEVE communities will build on the successes learned from the 2008 and 2009 ACHIEVE communities. The ACHIEVE approach aims to promote improvements in communities such as: increased access to attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; increased access to healthy food options such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains at schools, worksites, places of worship, and in the community at large; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly.

To date, the NACDD, the National County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) have partnered to fund 40 communities to become part of ACHIEVE, a leadership empowerment model that is mobilizing 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/ .

CINCH is a nationally recognized child health coalition whose mission is to engage the community to improve children's health. CINCH was established in 1993 as a demonstration project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Together with over 200 community partners, CINCH made significant progress in improving the health of children in Virginia. In Hampton Roads, CINCH has improved immunization rates, asthma management, perinatal health; enrolled thousands of children in health insurance programs; promoted implementation of community obesity prevention policies; trained thousands of local health and service providers on children's health issues; advocated for a multitude of child health issues; and brought significant resources into the region to improve children's health. CINCH's lead agency is Eastern Virginia Medical School.

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CINCH's City of Portsmouth ACHIEVE Initiative

A healthy community in Portsmouth will include a physical and social environment with the following attributes: **1)** easier access to high-quality, healthy foods for moderate and low-income residents; **2)** well-developed and maintained environments for active youth play; **3)** safe indoor and outdoor environments, including safe routes to school that are free from crime, traffic, and other safety hazards; **4)** school and other environments frequented by youth that are tobacco-free and promote and facilitate healthy behaviors; **5)** city codes that mandate an infrastructure with walkable, bikable, and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods, walkable destinations, and community green spaces; **6)** government, business, educational, media, faith, health, non-profit, and other organizations working in partnership to maximize the health of the city's residents and to address some of social determinants of health that often lead to health disparities and inequities; **7)** a strong infrastructure of policies and activities, including communications, funding and other support to sustain community-wide improvements over time, that can likely be replicated in other communities in Hampton Roads and elsewhere in Virginia. Portsmouth ACHIEVE will enhance our efforts to achieve this vision.

Proposed activities in Portsmouth include a focus on obesity and tobacco prevention, especially among youth. The CHART will work together and with other appropriate partners to develop and implement policies that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and smoke-free environments, particularly for youth in Portsmouth. The team anticipates a healthy impact on other residents as well. CHART members will lend their expertise and influence and that of their staff as appropriate to each effort. The following activities have been proposed by the CHART during initial planning.

- 1) **City Code Policy:** Determine the most effective ways to include health policy in the development of new form-based city codes. As a compact urban city with 100% "build-out", the opportunities for planning policy to enhance neighborhood walkability and access to recreation and nutritious food sources lie in urban redevelopment policies. The City's transition to form-based code began in November 2009 with the adoption of the Downtown District as the first area for implementation. As zoning regulations in the remainder of the City are gradually converted to form-based code over the next five years, there is the best opportunity to ensure mixed-used development with walkable streets and neighborhoods. New policies will include such items as placement of sidewalks, roads, and traffic calming to enhance walkability; location and use of parks and related facilities to promote physical activity and community gardening; and use of public offices and facilities for promotion of healthy eating and breastfeeding support for mothers.
- 2) **Tobacco Regulations:** Work with the State Health Department and state legislators to revise tobacco regulations to allow the restriction of smoking in public outdoor venues where children are present, such as sporting or other events where children are likely to be participants or spectators. This will provide an opportunity to support adults in quitting smoking and not be merely a behavioral restriction to reduce second-hand smoke exposure.

- 3) **Healthy Vending Policy:** Assess the use of vending machines in schools, recreation facilities, and worksites. Establish policies to either begin or enhance the promotion of healthy vending products, such as providing more healthy vending options where few exist or increasing the cost of unhealthy vending items to make them less attractive than some lower-cost healthier options.
- 4) **Community-Wide Health Promotion:** Work with private employers, businesses, faith-based communities, and others to establish organizational policies to increase the promotion of healthy eating, breastfeeding, physical activity, and decreased exposure to tobacco smoke. Hold a conference for these stakeholders focused on healthy policy adoption and implementation strategies as part of a call to action for the city.
- 5) **School-Based Policy:** Enhance school system wellness policy and the Safe Routes to School program, and engage the Parent-Teacher Associations and the school board in supporting healthy fundraising and reward systems.
- 6) **Child Care Policy:** Enhance local child care program policies to increase activity, decrease screen time, and improve healthy nutrition with an emphasis on early care and afterschool programs serving at-risk children from primarily minority and low socio-economic areas.

Portsmouth ACHIEVE Community Health Action Response Team (CHART)
Membership as of February 23, 2010:

CHART Team Lead & Partner Coaches:

Mr. Brannon Godfrey, Deputy City Manager, Portsmouth
Mrs. Amy Paulson, CINCH Director

CHART Team Members:

Dr. Cheza Garvin, Academic Director, CINCH/Assistant Professor, EVMS
Mr. Alan Gollihue, CEO/Director, Portsmouth General Hospital Foundation
Mrs. Kelly Jackson, Director, WHRO Center for Regional Citizenship
Mr. Michael Morris, Director, Portsmouth Parks & Recreation
Dr. Jose Rodriguez, Director, Portsmouth Health Department
Dr. David Stuckwisch, Superintendent, Portsmouth Schools
Ms. Kathy Warren, Deputy Exec. Director, Portsmouth Redevelopment & Housing Authority
Mr. Richard Wentz, CEO Portsmouth YMCA

For more information on ACHIEVE, contact CINCH at 757-668-6426 or CINCH@evms.edu or any of the CHART team coaches or members.