**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Report Measures Health of Capital-Area Communities**

Everyone wants to be healthy, but, unfortunately, some of us aren't. This is something Healthy! Capital Counties is working hard to change.

The group, along with health leaders from across the region, is pleased to announce that the 2015 Community Health Profile and Health Needs Assessment is now available to the public. The report, which measures the health of communities in Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham counties, is packed with important data, including maps on the spread of health problems in the region.

This project measures factors that go beyond health care and dives into what actually causes people to be healthy (or not) in the first place. It looks at how healthy we are, what health conditions we suffer from, and the root causes of those health problems.

Key findings include:

* The social conditions that promote health vary widely across the Capital Area. This means people who are minorities, low-income, or otherwise vulnerable are often less healthy than people who aren’t in vulnerable groups.
* Chronic disease is the main cause of death everywhere.
* Substance abuse and mental health drive other health problems.
* Lead poisoning is a problem in urban areas, but also in our rural areas.
* People still think of health care first when they think of health, but they also recognize the importance of social conditions.

Last October, a group of 68 community members and organization representatives gathered to review the results of the report and developed a set of priority health issues based on the report.

The Healthy! Capital Counties Priority Areas are:

* Access to Primary Health Care and Quality of Health Care
* Mental Health
* Chronic Disease
* Financial Stability

“Now that we’ve identified the priority health needs and what the root causes of those problems are, we will develop plans to improve health across the whole community where we live, work, learn, and play,” said Anne Barna, Healthy! Capital Counties Project Coordinator.

Hospitals, health departments, and other community organizations are already using the assessment to focus their health improvement efforts, based on what the community decides are the most important health problems. By moving in the same direction, local organizations hope that they will maximize their impact on these problems.

Community involvement is vital for an effective health assessment and improvement project. The public is encouraged to visit [www.healthycapitalcounties.org](http://www.healthycapitalcounties.org) to learn more about the Healthy! Capital Counties initiative, to view the report, and to submit feedback on the report. Those who are interested in becoming part of health improvement planning efforts in their county also can learn more by visiting the website.

Healthy! Capital Counties is coordinated by the Ingham County Health Department, Barry-Eaton District Health Department, and Mid-Michigan District Health Department, along with Sparrow Health System, McLaren-Greater Lansing, Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital, and Eaton Rapids Medical Center.

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Media Contacts:

*Ingham County Health Department: Amanda Darche (517) 648-9853*

*Barry-Eaton District Health Department: Anne Barna (517) 541-2694*

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department: Leslie Kinnee (989) 831-3669*

*Eaton Rapids Medical Center: Lindsay Peters (517) 663-9524*

*Hayes Green Beach Memorial Hospital: Darice Darling (517) 541-5831*

*McLaren Greater Lansing Hospital: Brian Brown (517) 975-7107*

*Sparrow Health System: John Foren (517) 364-8093*