



NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIALS

Leading the Way to Healthier Communities

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 4, 2024

For More Information, Please Contact:

Sarah Ravenhall, MHA, CHES, Executive Director, NYSACHO

518-527-3547

NYSACHO AND NYSDOH JOIN TO COMMEMORATE NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH WEEK WITH GRANTS TO 10 COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENTS TO AID EFFORTS IN COMBATting CLIMATE CHANGE

(Albany, NY) The New York State Association of County Health Officials (NYSACHO) today marked National Public Health Week (April 1-7) by joining with the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to announce awards to 10 local health departments in support of local climate related health initiatives.

Changes to the climate and related weather patterns are presenting new or enhanced challenges to local communities, including: confronting higher temperatures; preparing for and responding to more intense storms; and mitigating food insecurity and vector-borne diseases, among others. The funds provided in the grants will help local health departments meet these evolving challenges.

NYSACHO Executive Director Sarah Ravenhall said: “Our local health departments serve as the first line of defense against innumerable public health threats, including weather and climate events. As our climate changes with each passing year, these threats present in novel ways that we must be prepared to respond to. We are grateful to our partners in the state Health Department for their strong support of these initiatives and this important funding.”

State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said: “The New York State Department of Health continues to closely work with local health departments to prepare for what will be more frequent and intense challenges to public health due to climate change as higher temperatures and associated environmental impacts require that we work collaboratively to ensure equitable protection for all New Yorkers.”

The 10 awards, each capped at \$3,000, provide funding for the following initiatives:

- **Broome** - The Broome County Health Department (BCHD) will partner with Binghamton University’s Binghamton 2 Degrees initiative to conduct focus groups with at-risk individuals to develop effective messaging and action priorities around adaptation to climate change, health needs, and emergency preparedness.
- **Cayuga** - The Cayuga County Health Department will partner with Cayuga County’s Parks and Trails Department to install educational signage and distribute free tick removal kits to visitors at several regional parks and nature centers. The grant will also support enhanced social media education efforts.

- **Columbia** - The Columbia County Department of Health will prepare and distribute approximately 1,000 tick removal kits for the protection of county residents.
- **Jefferson** - Jefferson County Public Health Services will create a campaign to promote climate action planning in the community and encourage residents to submit creative suggestions for reducing energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Monroe** - The Monroe County Department of Public Health will engage with Spanish-speaking residents in disadvantaged communities on the topic of heat illness to learn from residents how to best meet their information needs concerning air quality issues.
- **Niagara** - The Niagara County Department of Health's project will address the importance of emergency preparedness by delivering community-based educational programs on how to properly prepare and respond to emergency situations.
- **Ontario** - Ontario County will invest in sunscreen dispensers to be installed at designated cooling recreational areas and will encourage residents to sign up for Ontario County's hyper-reach emergency alert system.
- **Otsego** - Otsego County Public Health will plant a community garden at the County owned Meadows Complex to grow, harvest, and distribute fresh produce through various channels to vulnerable populations who otherwise could not access these food options.
- **Steuben** - Steuben County Public Health will work with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Steuben County to bridge the gap between residents and the resources available to enhance their health and well-being. Funds will be used to undertake social media and radio campaigns, purchase TV ads, and develop educational materials for distribution at community events.
- **Tioga** - Tioga County Public Health will assemble tick removal kits and repellent wipes, with a specific focus on dissemination to older adults, men, and outdoor workers.

These awards advance NYSACHO's mission to support and empower local health departments in their work to promote health and wellness, and prevent disease, disability, and injury throughout New York State. For more information on NYSACHO's climate and health adaptation work, visit: <https://www.nysacho.org/topic/climate-and-health-adaptation/>.

To learn more about National Public Health Week, visit: <https://nphw.org/>.

###