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NEWS

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JUDY JOHNSTON RECEIVES LIFETIME COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

(Sedgwick County, Kan.) – For nearly 20 years, communities around the country have celebrated National Public Health Week each April to highlight the good work of public health professionals.

Locally, the Sedgwick County Health Department uses this time to recognize an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary commitment and contributions to public health. The 2014 recipient of the Dr. Doren Fredrickson* Lifetime Commitment to Public Health Award is Judy Johnston.

Johnston began her career in 1973 after graduating from Kansas State University as a clinical dietitian at St. Francis Hospital and progressively assumed more responsibilities until she became the Director of Nutrition Services at Riverside Hospital in Wichita. During her 17 years in clinical practice, she held adjunct faculty positions at Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, and Wichita State University, where she was involved with many diverse programs.

In 1990, Johnston was recruited by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to direct the Kansas Leadership to Encourage Activity and Nutrition (LEAN) Coalition.

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Her duties as directed included coordinating the Kansas “5 A Day” program, which established objectives for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and decreasing dietary fats among state residents, consistent with the Healthy People 2010 objectives.

Johnston was also made project director for developing patient protocols for the Center for Breast Cancer Survivorship in Wichita, protocols that would treat the “whole person” who had been through cancer treatment regimens. The patient-focused program addressed all issues related to surviving breast cancer, including chronic issues related to chemotherapy treatment, depression, proper nutrition, as well as strength and balance problems to name a few.

Johnston more recently took on the tremendous effort of the Healthy Congregations in Action project, funded by the United Methodist Health Ministry Fund, engaging 30 churches from all over the state. She was responsible for training, technical assistance, administering mini-grants to the churches and creating materials. Her other impressive work with churches includes training seminarians in integrating wellness, health, and prevention into their sermons.

Judy continues to work as a research instructor at KU School of Medicine in Wichita for the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health, to develop new programs for the advancement of public health, and mentor the next generation of public health professionals.

*Dr. Doren Fredrickson served as the Health Department’s health officer from 2002 to 2008; he was a dedicated, caring and enthusiastic health advocate who dedicated his entire career to improving public health.

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