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Four Community Organizations to Participate in National Public Health Program

SPOKANE, Wash. – Priority Spokane, Greater Spokane Incorporated, the Spokane County United Way and the Spokane Regional Health District have formed **Partners for a Healthy Spokane**, a team of four community organizations that has been selected to participate in the National Leadership Academy for the Public's Health (NLAPH) program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Partners for a Healthy Spokane will work on an applied health leadership project that tackles an important population health issue with the goal of improving public health outcomes. The proposed intervention is to analyze data about middle school children in Spokane Public Schools who have accrued four or more unexcused absences in order to understand the health and social factors that contribute to their absences. The team will share this analysis with the community to promote the development of interventions and an understanding of the significant long-term consequences when children miss school.

The team assembled to undertake this critical issue includes: Alisa D. May, Executive Director, Priority Spokane; Alisha Benson, Director of Education and Workforce, Greater Spokane Inc.; Sally Pritchard, VP of Community Impact, Spokane County United Way; and Lyndia Wilson, Disease Prevention and Response Director, Spokane Regional Health District.

"The benefits of this leadership project are many," says Wilson. "The four of us are involved in multiple efforts around educational attainment, so taking the time to coordinate and identify our community's gaps will have great value. We can influence other groups and agencies to focus on these areas by communicating what we find using our strengthened inter-sectoral leadership skills."

NLAPH is a national program focused on improving population health by working with multi-sector leadership teams and training the teams through an applied, team-based collaborative leadership development model. The program is implemented by the Center for Health Leadership and Practice (CHLP), a center of the Public Health Institute (PHI), and will provide training and support for a period of one year.

"This program will impart population health teams with the skills to lead across sectors and collaboratively solve complex population health problems in innovative ways," said Carmen Rita Nevarez MD, MPH, Vice President for External Relations and CHLP's Director. "These are the types of leaders who will ultimately be able to drive critical efforts, such as the adoption of evidence-based policies and practices at the community level, which can have a tangible impact on health outcomes."

Spokane County currently ranks 25th among all 39 Counties in the State of Washington according to the County Health Ranking & Roadmaps program, which is designed to help communities create solutions addressing specific factors that are known to affect health.

NLAPH will provide training and support to assist the team in successfully communicating areas the community could focus greater attention to positively impact graduation rates. Training and support will focus on two tracks. The first is the development of leadership skills, including personal and collaborative leadership in a multi-sector environment. The second emphasizes growth from team-based collaborative work to policy and systems change. NLAPH is provided at no cost to the participants or the community.