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Media Contact: Emily Killian, Community Engagement Specialist
(828) 695-6637, ekillian@catawbacountync.gov

CATAWBA COUNTY HEALTH PARTNERS SELECTED FOR THE DUKE ENDOWMENT'S HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY CAROLINAS INITIATIVE

Hickory, N.C. – Catawba County Health Partners has been awarded \$450,000 from The Duke Endowment to help improve health in Catawba County.

Catawba County Health Partners is one of five initial coalitions selected to take part in The Duke Endowment's new initiative, Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas. Health Partners will use the funds over three years to address chronic health issues and associated risk factors, including physical inactivity and poor nutrition. The coalition's application for the Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas initiative was sponsored by Catawba Valley Medical Center.

The initiative's four other coalitions represent Chatham County, Granville and Vance counties, Montgomery and Richmond counties, and Wilkes County.

Catawba County Health Partners serves as a community focal point to help identify needs, mobilize resources, facilitate collaboration, bridge gaps and coordinate community-wide efforts toward improving the county's most critical health issues. The coalition relies on community collaboration to create an environment that makes it easier for residents to make healthy choices.

"Our environment – where we live, where we go to school and work, how we spend our free time and even our ability to access fresh food and safely exercise near our homes – contributes to our health and well-being," said Michelle Roseman, board chairperson for Catawba County Health Partners and Chief Operating Officer/Executive Vice President of Catawba Regional Hospice. "To truly improve overall health in our community, we have to think about what affects our health in new and different ways. It's more than just what we eat and how many calories we burn. If we can improve health for even a part of our community, we will have learned a lot about how to increase quality of life for all Catawba County residents."

America's Health Rankings places North Carolina 31st among all states for the overall health of its residents, with two out of three people living in North Carolina identified as being overweight or obese. Healthy People, Healthy Carolinas recognizes that health and well-being are created and sustained not just through individual and clinical efforts, but through the cooperation and support of the community as a whole.

Catawba County Health Partners ▪ 3070 11th Ave. Dr. SE ▪ Hickory, NC 28602

(828) 695-5800

www.catawbacountyhealthpartners.org

“The health challenges facing the Carolinas have been decades in the making,” said Mary Piepenbring, vice president of The Duke Endowment. “They cannot be effectively addressed overnight, nor can they be solved by individuals and organizations working alone. We’re starting with communities that have considerable health needs, but also proven ability to take on local challenges. They have a history of successful community-wide collaboration.”

The first step is to strengthen the infrastructure of the local coalitions that are coordinating the effort, so that they're well-positioned to identify and implement interventions that work. Representatives from Catawba County Health Partners and the other four coalitions will participate in a learning collaborative with opportunities to share information with each other as they develop best practices for organizing, planning and implementing evidence-based programs known to improve health.

“The coalitions selected by the Endowment are intentionally diverse and unique,” said Laura Edwards, of Population Health Improvement Partners, the North Carolina-based organization that will provide expert assistance to each local coalition. “While there will be many opportunities for exchanging ideas, each community will receive support to pave its own path forward. The hope is that eventually the lessons of the five coalitions can inform the work of others throughout the Carolinas.”

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has awarded more than \$3 billion in grants.

Catawba County Health Partners fosters partnerships aimed at sustainably improving Catawba County’s health priorities of physical activity, nutrition and chronic disease. A 501(c) 3 organization, Health Partners is governed by a multi-sector Board of Directors and managed by Catawba County Public Health.