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Public Health Week to Focus on Improving Kids' Health by Designing a Healthier Illinois

(Springfield, IL) – As part of a weeklong observance of National Public Health Week, April 3-9, local officials and public health experts in Illinois will sponsor activities in honor of Public Health Week's theme: "Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids".

Communities across Illinois and the country will consider how buildings, roads, sidewalks and neighborhood design are affecting the health of children. For example, children who live close enough to school to walk often do not because they have no sidewalks to walk on. Air pollution has contributed to higher rates of childhood asthma, and the lack of access to fresh foods and avenues for activity in some neighborhoods has contributed to rising rates of childhood obesity. Coordinated by the American Public Health Association, each day will focus on the relationship between the built environment and a core children's health issue, with additional focus on effective solutions based on case studies from model communities.

Monday: *Designing Healthy Communities: Raising Healthy Kids*
Tuesday: *Surrounding Our Kids with Equal Opportunities*
Wednesday: *Surrounding Our Kids with Physical Activity*
Thursday: *Surrounding Our Kids with Safety*
Friday: *Surrounding Our Kids with Clean Air*

Events planned throughout Illinois in honor of NPHW include health fairs, educational sessions, a Governor's proclamation, research day, run/walk and public health awards. During the week, the American Public Health Association and the Illinois Public Health Association encourage residents in Illinois to take action to change the built environment and improve kids' health. "The built environment was created by man, so the good news is that we can change it and build an infrastructure that supports the goals of public health to ensure the health and safety of our children and families in Illinois," says Jim Nelson, Executive Director of the Illinois Public Health Association.

More information about Public Health Week and a list of activities planned in Illinois is available at www.nphw.org. For additional information, please contact the Illinois Public Health Association at 217-522-5687.

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