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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Growing Your Own Food is a SNAP with Seed and Plant Sales at CUPHD**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District is Hosting a Seed and Plant Sale Day*

Champaign, IL –The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) will be hosting a seed and plant sale for anyone with SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits on Tuesday, May 29, 2012 at 201 West Kenyon Road in Champaign from 1:00 – 5:30 PM, as part of the Farmers’ Market season kick-off.

Seeds will be available for purchase from 10 to 50 cents per package and plants will be available for between \$1.00 and \$3.50 each, depending on variety. Available plants will include broccoli, peppers and tomatoes (multiple varieties), cucumber, eggplant, strawberry, spaghetti squash, zucchini, watermelon, cantaloupe, sweet potato and more. These items can be purchased at a much cheaper price than fresh produce. One \$3.00 tomato plant can produce up to 10 to 15 pounds of tomatoes whereas you might pay \$4.98 for two pounds of tomatoes at a local grocer; one \$3.00 seedless watermelon plant can produce multiple watermelons but would cost \$6.00 for one watermelon at the grocery store; one \$3.00 cucumber plant also produces multiple cucumbers but costs \$4.00 for two cucumbers at the store; and six red or yellow peppers could cost \$7.00 when purchased at a local grocer.

According to Brandon Meline, Director of Maternal and Child Health at CUPHD, “I believe a majority of SNAP benefit recipients do not know that they can purchase food-producing plants and seeds with their benefits and this is a great way to increase access to healthy, fresh foods and to increase the amount of food received with each dollar of SNAP benefits. It is not promoted widely because many places such as hardware stores that sell seeds and plants are not SNAP vendors because they do not meet all of the criteria, and many places that meet the criteria do not sell seeds and plants. Luckily, CUPHD is able to offer this service as part of our Farmers’ Market SNAP vendor license.”

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This sale will be one day only and leads into the weekly 1:00 – 5:30 PM Tuesday Farmers' Market at CUPHD, which will begin June 5<sup>th</sup>. SNAP benefits, as well as cash and WIC Farmers' Market vouchers, are also accepted at these markets, which highlight locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamps) helps low-income individuals and families buy the food they need for good health. The Department of Human Services administers the program in Illinois.

For more information about CUPHD's programs and services, visit us on the web at [www.c-uphd.org](http://www.c-uphd.org).

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