



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Defiance County General Health District Awarded National Accreditation Through the Public Health Accreditation Board**

Defiance, Ohio — Defiance County General Health District (DCGHD) announced today that it has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). The national accreditation program works to improve and protect the health of the public by advancing and ultimately transforming the quality and performance of the nation's state, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments. DCGHD is one of fewer than 300 health departments that have thus far achieved accreditation through PHAB since the organization launched in 2011. However, hundreds of health departments across the country are preparing to seek accreditation through PHAB, the non-profit organization that administers the national public health accreditation program.

"We are pleased and excited to be recognized for achieving national standards that foster effectiveness and promote continuous quality improvement," said Jamie Gerken, Health Commissioner of Defiance County General Health District "The accreditation process helps to ensure that the programs and services we provide are as responsive as possible to the needs of our community. We have been on this accreditation journey for six years. We took a slow approach to ensure that the standards that the accreditation process outlines were engrained within our culture and that this process would make our agency better. With accreditation, DCGHD is demonstrating increased accountability and credibility to our community, elected officials and partner organizations with which we work."

The national accreditation program, jointly supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sets standards against which the nation's nearly 3,000 governmental public health departments can continuously improve the quality of their services and performance. To receive accreditation, a health department must undergo a rigorous, multi-faceted, peer-reviewed assessment process to ensure it meets or exceeds a set of quality standards and measures.

"Whenever you see our seal of accreditation, you will know that DCGHD has been rigorously examined and meets or exceeds national standards that promote continuous quality improvement for public health," Gerken said. "By continuing to improve our services and performance, we can be sure we are meeting the public health needs of those we serve as effectively as possible."

Public health departments play a critical role in protecting and improving the health of people and communities. In cities, towns, and states across the nation, health departments provide a range of services aimed at promoting healthy behaviors; preventing diseases and injuries; ensuring access to safe food, water, clean air, and life-saving immunizations; and preparing for and responding to public health emergencies.

“Defiance County General Health District joins the growing ranks of accredited health departments in a strong commitment to their public health mission,” said PHAB President and CEO Kaye Bender, PhD, RN, FAAN. “The peer-review process provides valuable feedback to inform health departments of their strengths and areas for improvement, so that they can better protect and promote the health of the people they serve in their communities. Residents of a community served by a nationally accredited health department can be assured that their health department has demonstrated the capacity to protect and promote the health of that community.”

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For more information, or to schedule an interview with Jamie Gerken please call 419-784-3818.

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