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**Healthy Portsmouth CHART Members Attend National Forum to
Combat Chronic Diseases and Promote Healthy Communities
--Citizens Invited to August 10 and 17 Community Forums!--**

Portsmouth, VA – (August 9, 2010) – Recently, leaders in the Portsmouth community participated in a national action institute in Tampa, FL on June 21 – 24 where they learned firsthand from experts about strategies to combat obesity and other chronic diseases. These leaders are part of Community Health Action Response Teams, or CHARTs, who have been mobilized to address health concerns in our city. The Healthy Portsmouth CHART is part of an initiative called Action Communities for Health, Innovation and EnVironmental Change (ACHIEVE).

The City of Portsmouth was one of 10 communities receiving ACHIEVE funding early in 2010 from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) with support from the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In all, 93 communities have received ACHIEVE funding.

Presenters at the action institute included national leaders in the fight against chronic diseases. Dr. Wayne Giles, Director, Division of Adult and Community Health at the CDC, kicked off the program describing the critical role of chronic disease management, citing the burden to our society caused by chronic diseases. Prevention Institute policy guru Larry Cohen, M.S., taught participants how to weave organizational practice and policy-change initiatives into everyday community-building work. Mark Fenton, noted author, television personality, and walking enthusiast, highlighted the built environment and how it impacts health; he also led participants on a walking tour of Tampa, FL.

Healthy Portsmouth CHART members are currently assessing the health needs of the City and invite citizens to participate in the discussion in community forums on August 10 & 17 at 6pm at the Portsmouth YMCA. From data collected in the needs assessment process, the CHART will develop plans to promote policy and environmental changes in our community. They will also begin long-term planning to support healthy living such as promoting healthy school vending and food offerings, access to parks and walking/biking trails, sidewalks and farmers markets, as well as systems improvements for people living with chronic diseases.

“By building healthy communities and supporting people in healthy living we can make a difference in the health of our nation” said John Robitscher, MPH, NACDD Executive Director. Healthy Portsmouth member Brannon Godfrey further replied that “In our own backyard and neighborhoods are where we see health improvements that will support families, employees, and our community to reduce the heavy personal burden faced by citizens and reduce the economic cost to society of chronic diseases.” For more information on the ACHIEVE Initiative visit www.achievecommunities.org .

About the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD)

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) is a national public health association for chronic disease program directors of each state and U.S. territory. The NACDD works to reduce the impact of chronic diseases on the American population by advocating for preventative policies and programs, encouraging sharing of knowledge and developing partnerships for health promotion. NACDD is one of five national partners who receive support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to provide direct technical assistance to select communities. (www.chronicdisease.org).

About the Action Communities for Health, Innovation and EnVironmental Change Program (ACHIEVE)

ACHIEVE is a national, state and local partnership working to advance leadership and action to reduce chronic diseases and their related risk factors. Community Heath Action Response Teams (CHART) members focus on improving the environment where people live, work, play, and learn. Promoting actions and advancements around physical activity, nutrition, and tobacco, as well as improving health systems and other systems of care providing services to those with chronic diseases will give people of all ages the support needed to lead healthier lives in our community.

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