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**One in Three Adults in Rural Areas Have Arthritis**

*52 Weeks of Public Health Campaign: New Report Shows Impact of Arthritis in Rural Areas*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (May 31, 2017) – As part of the 52 Weeks of Public Health campaign, the Kentucky Department of Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), is emphasizing the negative impact of arthritis on people who live in rural areas.

A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showed that one-third of adults in rural areas have arthritis, and that more than one-half of that population is limited in their daily activities by the condition. In Kentucky, more than one million adults have doctor-diagnosed arthritis and more than half (570,000) of those with arthritis live in rural parts of the state. Furthermore, 45 percent of rural working age adults report that arthritis limits their ability to work.

“Many senior centers, local health departments, the University of Kentucky Center of Excellence on Rural Health and YMCAs offer proven exercise and self- management programs that help relieve arthritis pain,” said Teri Wood, principal investigator on the CDC Arthritis grant for DPH. “Our program is always seeking local organizations already serving rural populations, including churches, county extension agents, veterans’ service organizations, health care clinics, and community centers that might be able to collaborate to make the small-group versions of these low-cost programs more available.”

DPH and the Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL), within CHFS, collaborate on arthritis prevention and control to increase access to programs for arthritis management. Programs such as Walk with Ease, Enhance Fitness and the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program as examples of effective arthritis management tools that are available in many communities across the state. More information can be found here: <http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph/info/dpqi/cd/arthritis.htm>.

Throughout the planned 52 Weeks of Public Health promotion, DPH will spotlight a specific public health issue. Additional information about the campaign is available on the DPH website: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/default.htm> and will be posted on the CHFS Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/kychfs> where Kentuckians are encouraged to like and share posts among their networks of friends.

More information on the impact of arthritis nationwide can be found here: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr).

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services, the Department for Public Health, and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*