



Statewide Media Advisory Release

Media Contact: Doug Hogan,
(502) 564-7042, ext. 3467

Summit Focuses Attention on Children’s Environmental Health

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 15, 2017) — Public health specialists, health care providers, environmental experts, school personnel and representatives from child health organizations were among those gathered today at the Children’s Environmental Health Summit in Bowling Green. CHFS Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson opened the event by providing an overview of issues impacting children’s health and urging attendees to continue their efforts to protect young people.

In her remarks, Sec. Glisson called attention to the many issues in a child’s surroundings or built environment, such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that can impact growth and development. She went on to discuss other issues such as lead poisoning, asthma, secondhand smoke, childhood cancer, and developmental disabilities such as autism.

Sec. Glisson credited public health’s success in creating a mechanism to better track these environmental health measures and collect data that informs policy efforts.

“You are providing convincing evidence that our environmental quality standards are directly tied to health and well-being and that is critical in our efforts to design public policy that adequately addresses public health and safety,” said Sec. Glisson. “Whether we are talking about air quality, safe drinking water, or food safety, the things around us – our environment – impact our health, our productivity, and our longevity. We owe it to our children to make sure their environment is as healthy as possible”

The event, sponsored by [Kentucky EnviroHealthLink](#), took place at the Knicely Center, Western Kentucky University’s conference center. [Kentucky EnviroHealthLink](#) is an online tool that helps analyze and evaluate the impact various environmental factors have on health in Kentucky. [EnviroHealthLink](#) works closely with multiple public health programs and initiatives to provide information and data about how the environment affects human health.

“As we work to improve the collective health of our state, we cannot overlook the connection between health and the environment,” said Janie Cambron, program manager for [EnviroHealthLink](#). “Our program brings health and environment data together in one place. Users of EnviroHealthLink can now more closely examine possible links between environmental problems like air pollution and chronic diseases like asthma.”

Conference breakout sessions included discussions on the impact of adverse childhood events; the role of nutrition in children’s lives; healthy tap water; air quality in schools; and child trafficking, among other topics. For participants, the summit was designed to;

- Increase knowledge regarding the environment and hazards and how they affect human health.
- Present current theoretical knowledge to enhance and expand skills for nurses, teachers, academics, and public health professionals.
- Promote competence in decision making.
- Gain awareness of environmental exposures and how to reduce these for children.
- Understand the use of data from the EnviroHealthLink and how this might drive policy decisions.
- Understand the effects of severe weather patterns on children.
- Gain knowledge about environmental health equity and how ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) impact health
- Identify the relationship between nutrition and children’s wellbeing.
- Gather ideas to integrate nature and natural surrounding into any environment.
- Identify ways to combat child-trafficking and help protect the lives of children.

[EnviroHealthLink](#) is the result of a grant award of \$1.875 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which houses the national Public Health Environmental Tracking System. Kentucky joins the national network of 25 states and one city that tracks information on various topics including air quality, drinking water, asthma and cancer. Follow [EnvirohealthLink](#) on Twitter at @EnviroHealthKy.

-30-

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, the Department for Aging and Independent Living 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.