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Rappahannock Area Health District and Mary Washington Healthcare Launch Community Health Assessment Process

(Fredericksburg, Virginia) -- The Rappahannock Area Health District (RAHD) is partnering with Mary Washington Healthcare (MWHC) to complete a Community Health Assessment (CHA) for Planning District 16, including the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Stafford, Spotsylvania, King George, and Caroline.

A CHA is completed every few years to help identify health- related needs and assets in our community, and this marks the first year that RAHD and MWHC will collaborate on this effort. MWHC completes a CHA every three years for its two hospitals. The CHA is a requirement of their nonprofit status and in their commitment to fulfil their mission to improve the health of the people in the communities they serve. In an effort to better utilize community participation in the assessments and to avoid duplication of efforts, RAHD and MWHC have joined together this year in conducting a single health assessment. Over 55 additional organizations, including nonprofits, faith-based groups, and government agencies are also participating in the process to provide guidance and feedback.

"Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic public health has been top of mind for everyone; beginning the CHA process now will help us build on the strong relationships we have formed and ensure when the next threat to health comes along we're united in the fight," said RAHD's Health Director Dr. Olugbenga Obasanjo.

This process looks beyond the traditional medical definition of health (i.e. the healthcare system) to examine *the social determinants of health* such as housing, income, employment, education, access to healthy food and more. The CHA is designed as a collaborative process that brings multiple local organizations/groups and residents together to gain the truest understanding of life in our community.

"MWHC and RAHD have complementary goals focused on supporting the members of our community in achieving their highest level of health and well-being," said MWHC's Senior Vice President and Chief Development Officer Xavier Richardson. "This great opportunity to work together on the CHA allows both of us to fulfill not only our organizational requirements but also pursue important community-identified priorities."

The CHA includes a series of assessments that examine quantitative data, qualitative data, and community feedback regarding needs and assets in the community. The assessment portion of the project enables the community to identify health priorities to be addressed, which are then used to develop a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a plan to improve population health outcomes and work to eliminate inequities in the community. RAHD plans to begin the CHIP process in Spring 2022, after the completion of the CHA.

A previous CHA/CHIP that RAHD completed for Fredericksburg City in 2017 is available at
https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/rappahannock/action-2/

A previous CHA that MWHC completed for the Rappahannock Region in 2019 is available at
https://www.marywashingtonhealthcare.com/documents/PDFs/Rappahanock-2019-CHNA-FINAL.pdf

For additional information about the CHA and CHIP processes you can visit the NACCHO website at
https://www.naccho.org/programs/public-health-infrastructure/performance-improvement/community-health-assessment

Rappahannock Area Health District *is one of 35 health districts under the Virginia Department of Health. RAHD provides medical, environmental, and public health services to residents of the City of Fredericksburg and Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford counties, serving a population of more than 375,000. Its mission is to protect the community and the environment through the prevention of disease, lasting community partnerships, access to quality services, and the promotion of healthy behaviors.*

Mary Washington Healthcare *is a fully integrated, regional medical system that provides inpatient and outpatient care through over 50 facilities including Mary Washington Hospital, a 471-bed regional medical center, and Stafford Hospital, a 100-bed community hospital. Mary Washington Healthcare is a non-profit health system with a longstanding commitment to provide care regardless of ability to pay. For more information about our services and facilities, visit mwhc.com.*

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