

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Garrett County Receives RWJF Culture of Health Prize For Efforts to Improve Health and Well-Being

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Recognizes Garrett County, Maryland for its progressive, cohesive approach to community health

Oakland, MD – Garrett County, MD, is one of eight winners of the 2017 RWJF Culture of Health Prize awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Prize honors communities for their unwavering efforts to ensure all residents have the opportunity to live healthier, happier lives. Garrett is the first community in Maryland to receive this coveted award.

Garrett County is being recognized nationally for pursuing innovative ideas and bringing partners together to rally around a shared vision of health. Chosen from more than 200 applicant communities across the country, Garrett County's award winning efforts include the Community Action Committee's 2-Generation Program, Garrett Regional Medical Center's Well Patient Program, and the Garrett County Health Department's mygarrettcounty.com, a state-of-the-art portal enabling people throughout the community to participate in discussions about health, work, education, and more.

"We are very proud to have been chosen to receive this prize," says Mark Boucot, President and CEO of Garrett Regional Medical Center. "Garrett County has a collaborative spirit that permeates our response to the challenges we face. When we look at what needs to be done, or what we'd like to see happen, everyone comes to the table to help figure out the best approach. That really defines how we look at health – at the hospital, we rely on our partners in the community to inform our strategic planning to help make sure our patients are getting the comprehensive support they need. That collaborative essence sets our community apart."

"For the past five years, RWJF Culture of Health Prize communities have inspired hope across the country. We welcome these new eight Prize communities who are forging partnerships to improve health for their residents," said Richard Besser, MD, RWJF president and CEO. "There are now 35 prize-winning communities across the country that are thinking big, building on their strengths, and engaging residents as equal partners to tackle the problems that they see."

Garrett County will receive a \$25,000 cash prize, joining a network of Prize-winning communities that have their inspiring accomplishments shared throughout the nation. The other seven winning communities are: Algoma, Wisconsin; Allen County, Kansas; Chelsea, Massachusetts; Richmond, Virginia; San Pablo, California, Seneca Nation of Indians in western New York, and Vicksburg, Mississippi.

To become an RWJF Culture of Health Prize winner, Garrett County had to demonstrate how it excelled in the following six criteria:

- Defining health in the broadest possible terms.

- Committing to sustainable systems changes and policy-oriented long-term solutions.
- Cultivating a shared and deeply-held belief in the importance of equal opportunity for health.
- Harnessing the collective power of leaders, partners, and community members.
- Securing and making the most of available resources.
- Measuring and sharing progress and results.

“This prize comes as recognition of the fact that Garrett County thinks beyond the obvious,” notes Bob Stephens, Garrett County Health Officer. “When we have challenges here, we look at how the community can respond, using our available resources. And when we have challenges that our resources can’t necessarily address, we look at how to develop the resources we need. It’s very gratifying to be named a Culture of Health Prize winner.”

Garrett County will join this year’s other Prize winning communities at the Culture of Health Prize Celebration and Learning Event at Robert Wood Johnson Foundation headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey on October 11-12.

Learn more about Garrett County’s work, as well as this year’s other Prize winners through a collection videos, photos, and more at www.rwjf.org/Prize.

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About the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

For more than 40 years the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has worked to improve health and health care. We are working with others to build a national Culture of Health enabling everyone in America to live longer, healthier lives. For more information, visit www.rwjf.org Follow the Foundation on Twitter at www.rwjf.org/twitter or on Facebook at www.rwjf.org/facebook.

About the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute

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