



#HealthierMO

Transforming the Future of Public Health in Missouri

Initiative Gains Momentum

The Transforming the Future of Public Health in Missouri (TFPH) initiative takes an exciting step forward by hiring two public health professionals to guide the project over the next year.

Project Manager, Casey Parnell, MPH, MPA, is a Branson, Missouri native, now enjoying life in rural central Missouri after a recent move. She received Master's Degrees in Public Health and Public Affairs from the University of Missouri in 2013. Her most recent public health experiences include working on drug and alcohol abuse prevention for the Taney County Health Department and tobacco control for the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

Parnell says her passion for policy and systems-level change led her to get involved with the TFPH project. She describes herself as an enthusiastic promoter of public health and says the optimistic and innovative nature of this initiative is exciting and inspiring. Parnell shares that her experience working with passionate and tireless public health officials and community volunteers has convinced her that Missouri can be a leader in public health. She is looking forward to working with everyone to transform Missouri's public health system and improve the health of all Missourians.

Jaci McReynolds brings 20 years of experience in media, public information, and public health to the role of Communications Coordinator for the TFPH initiative. McReynolds earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications in 1993 and a Masters of Health Administration in 2014. She worked in the field as a regional public health officer and as a local public health agency administrator before launching her own consulting business in 2014 with a focus on supporting local public health agencies in Missouri.

McReynolds says she fell in love with public health when she entered the field in 2002. She has worked with dozens of local public health departments in Missouri where she says passionate staff work tirelessly to provide vital public health services in their communities. She believes the challenges to providing relevant, sustainable, quality public health services can be addressed as the TFPH initiative brings stakeholders together to build a better public health system for Missouri and ensure residents a healthier place to live.

Parnell and McReynolds will work under the leadership of the initiative's Steering Committee. Their initial goals will be to expand dialogue with stakeholders, host meetings to gain input, and build the framework for a successful outcome.

"Hiring Casey and Jaci gives the initiative a big boost in momentum," says Robert Niezgoda, president of the Missouri Public Health Association. "We've spent the last few years proving the need for this project, and gathering support from stakeholders around the state. We are excited to finally start taking large strides forward." ■

The Missouri Public Health Association is leading the #HealthierMO initiative in partnership with Support KC. Funding for the first phase of this multi-year initiative was provided by the Missouri Foundation for Health and the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City. To learn more, visit www.HealthierMO.org.