



Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

December 3rd, 2024

The Hamilton County Health Department Recognized as Recipient of a Gold “Bright Spot Award” for Inclusive Community Initiative Effort

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN— The Hamilton County Health Department has been named a recipient of the prestigious Gold “Bright Spot Award” from the Tennessee Department of Health's (TDH) Office of Primary Prevention. The Bright Spot Award, presented by the TDH Office of Primary Prevention, recognizes local programs and initiatives that significantly improve health outcomes and equity in Tennessee communities. This recognition highlights the department’s commitment to creating inclusive health initiatives that address the unique needs of individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD).

“Hamilton County Health Department expresses deep gratitude to TDH for this recognition and thanks the dedicated staff, community partners, and program participants whose efforts have made the *Inclusive Community Initiative* successful. We are incredibly proud of our staff and their unwavering dedication to this initiative,” said Renee Craig, Health Education Program Manager. “Together, we have created systemic change across our health department, breaking down barriers and ensuring everyone can access the services they deserve. Public health is for everyone, and this achievement reflects our commitment to that core principle.”

The Hamilton County Inclusive Community Initiative is a model for advancing health equity by prioritizing accessibility, community engagement, and collaboration. This initiative addresses barriers to health education, resources, and participation for individuals with ID/DD, empowering them to lead healthier, more connected lives.

“This award reflects the transformative power of inclusion,” said Christopher Marinello, MS, Step ONE. “Through the Inclusive Community Initiative, we are not only improving health outcomes for individuals with ID/DD but also creating opportunities for them to thrive in every aspect of their lives. We are honored to be recognized as a Gold Bright Spot recipient and inspired to continue building an equitable and inclusive community for all.”

The Health Department’s Inclusive Community Initiative focused on the following areas:

- Adapt community health programs to promote physical activity/nutrition education for people with ID/DD.
- Advocate for Developmental Disabilities Awareness through social media.
- Educate staff and attend professional development training on providing services for individuals with ID/DD and their caregivers. (Ex. Alzheimer’s/Dementia, Epilepsy, and Autism training)
- Utilizing over \$64,000 for multigenerational, inclusive park equipment for three county parks.

Additional resources

- Questions? Call the Health Department at 423-209-8000.
- Free interpretation services are available at all Health Department clinics.
- For Health Department information, visit: Health.HamiltonTN.gov
- To read this information in Spanish, visit the Health Department’s Spanish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>