



Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

May 24th, 2024

Hamilton County Health Department Announces the Implementation of “HealthMatters™,” Becoming the First Health Department in the State to Launch the Program

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN—The Hamilton County Health Department announces the successful implementation of “HealthMatters™,” becoming the first health department in the state to launch the program. [HealthMatters™](#) is an evidence-based, 12-week healthy lifestyle course for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (ID/DD).

Certified HealthMatters™ Program Instructors and support staff across 35 states and 8 countries have impacted over 10,000 individuals with developmental disabilities. These instructors have helped improve the health behaviors and overall health status of people with ID/DD by addressing important lifestyle and behavior topics such as:

- Psychosocial and physiological health status
- Knowledge and self-efficacy
- Fitness: FABS Flexibility, Aerobics, Balance, Strength

“This course provides education on how to choose healthier meals and activities to implement more physical activity into their daily lives,” says Haleigh Dunning, Public Health Educator at the Health Department. “This program is designed for individuals of all ages.”

Health Department Public Health Educators became certified in this program at the beginning of the year to provide outreach for individuals with disabilities on physical activity, nutrition, and overall health behavior. The Health Education staff have implemented HealthMatters™ in partnership with the [Orange Grove Center](#) as the first cohort in the area.

“The title of this national initiative says it all: Health Matters. While it matters to everyone, it especially refers to individuals with disabilities who historically have limited access to comprehensive healthcare,” says Rick Rader, MD, Director of the Habilitation Center at Orange Grove Center. “The partnership between Orange Grove and the Hamilton County Health Department is a vital and significant collaboration aimed at empowering health decision-making for this vulnerable population.”

The Health Department would like to thank and congratulate the participants from Orange Grove that have successfully completed the first 12-week program. Future plans are to partner with more organizations in the county to provide the HealthMatters™ Program. The Health Department looks forward to implementing these services to aid individuals with disabilities in living happier, healthier lives with increased health outcomes and quality of life.

Additional resources

- Questions? Call the Health Department at 423-209-8000.
- 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>