



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 29, 2009

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KING COUNTY HOSTS NATIONAL INITIATIVE TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES

SEATTLE – The King County PLACE MATTERS Team will host a three-day meeting Sept. 30-Oct. 2 at the Pan Pacific Hotel to address the social conditions that lead to poor health outcomes in individuals from low-income communities and communities of color.

More than 100 representatives from 24 U.S. cities and counties will attend the PLACE MATTERS Design Lab 11. PLACE MATTERS is a national initiative of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies Health Policy Institute and is funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

"We are honored to host this important meeting among groups from around the country that are addressing the root causes of inequities," said King County Executive Kurt Triplett. "With our King County Equity and Social Justice Initiative, we have made a commitment to work with our local communities on comprehensive solutions. We want all our residents to live in vibrant communities where they can achieve their full potential."

"We need new approaches if we are to unravel the complex problems that contribute to the health care crisis in communities of color," said Ralph B. Everett, President and CEO of the Joint Center. "We can never lose sight of the fact that inequitable social conditions contribute to health inequities."

On Wednesday, participants will be welcomed to King County by Councilmember Julia Patterson, who is also chair of the King County Board of Health. A King County tour on that day will include a visit to the Longhouse of the Duwamish Tribe, the host tribe for Seattle, in addition to visit and walking tour of Greenbridge, a new, mixed-income, master planned community in White Center.

PLACE MATTERS takes an approach that crosses disciplines in problem solving. Teams, comprised of business, public and private sector leaders, are exposed not only to experts in community health and public health but also others in economic development, transportation, affordable housing, public policy and smart growth. PLACE MATTERS has 16 teams across the United States that are engaged in forming partnerships with major

stakeholders in a variety of fields to make systemic changes that can lead to improved health status in their communities.

Improving health status by tackling broad social problems such as a lack of affordable housing, inadequate schools, violence and anemic economic development combines social and medical theory. PLACE MATTERS is moving theory into practice by equipping communities with the tools to change the social conditions that impact health outcomes.

A hallmark of the PLACE MATTERS Initiative is the collaboration and networking among team members both to provide a support system and to disseminate best practices.

For more information on the King County Equity & Social Justice Initiative, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/equity.

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The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is one of the nation's leading research and public policy institutions and the only one whose work focuses primarily on issues of particular concern to African Americans and other people of color. It will mark its 40th Anniversary of service in 2010. For more information about the Joint Center, please visit our Web site at www.jointcenter.org.

The PLACE MATTERS initiative is supported by a generous grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, www.wkkf.org.