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Contact:
Heather Jameson, Research!America, 703-739-2577, ext. 20
JoAnn Bennison, NYSACHO, 518-456-7905
Laurie Williams, Clinton County Health Dept. 565-4840

New Yorkers Value Public Health
New State Poll Offers Insights into Support for Public Health Services

ALBANY, NY—April 3, 2006—A recent telephone survey commissioned by Research!America of 800 adults in New York found that the state's residents value public health and want increased funding for public health services. Conducted in January 2006, the survey was sponsored by the New York State Community Health Partnership, a public-private partnership dedicated to improving community health. A discussion about the poll results will be presented at the University at Albany School of Public Health, East Campus, Rensselaer, on April 6 from 9-10:30 am.

The survey found that 84% of New York residents support increased funding for public health departments that are expected to prepare for and respond to threats to our health. Virtually all New Yorkers (96%) say public health services are an important priority for the state. However, the public's high level of support for public health is not matched by familiarity with the local agencies that deliver it: 33% are not aware of their own local health department, and 40% either do not believe that they personally have benefited from public health services or are not sure.

Other survey findings included:

- Virtually all (99%) surveyed think that preventing the spread of infectious diseases like tuberculosis, measles, flu and AIDS is very important in improving the health of public. Other important efforts to improve public health include ensuring that doctors, clinics, and hospitals are providing quality health care and providing health care for those who cannot afford it.
- 94% say it is important for New York to educate and train individuals qualified to serve as state and local public health officers.

"We are encouraged by the results that show strong public support for New York's public health system and the benefits of promoting and developing healthy lifestyles," said State Health Commissioner Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr. P.H. "Public health is about the health and safety of one's family and community, and we are pleased that New Yorkers support these essential services. Governor George E. Pataki recognizes the needs of public health and is responding by increasing state aid for local health departments and continuing his commitments to emerging areas of public health need such as the Activ8Kids! obesity prevention and awareness campaign and preparedness for any public health emergency or natural disaster."

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“New Yorkers clearly see the value of public health in protecting their families’ health and safety,” said Mary Woolley, president of Research!America, which partnered with the New York State Community Health Partnership in developing the poll. “In state polls around the country, we see similar levels of support for public health and for investing in research to identify new ways to protect our health and prevent injury and disability.” Research!America is a not-for-profit alliance working to make medical and health research a higher national priority.

Today, The New York State Community Health Partnership, a public-private partnership dedicated to improving community health, launches Public Health Works, a campaign to inform New Yorkers about the range of important public health work being done in their communities.

“The key word in public health is ‘public,’ and the Research!America survey shows that the public understands and appreciates public health,” said JoAnn Bennison, Executive Director of the New York State Association of County Health Officers. “However, we still have work to do in helping New Yorkers understand the vital role of local health departments in protecting the public’s health.”

The Director of the Clinton County Health Department, Paula Calkins Lacombe is proud of the accomplishments and the level of service provided here in Clinton County. “We are a full service health department. We provide everything from home health care, to childhood immunizations, septic system approval, community based health education and everything in between”.

“We have a dedicated staff of professionals whose primary mission is to improve the health of all Clinton County residents. We often say that when public health works, nothing happens”. In other words, there are no disease outbreaks, food poisoning situations and 100% of our children are immunized, Lacombe further stated.

For the full survey results please visit www.researchamerica.org.

For more information about the campaign, please contact JoAnn Bennison, Executive Director, NYS Association of County Health Officials, at 518-456-7905. Residents of Clinton County can visit us on the web at www.clintonhealth.org.

Endorsed by:

Paula Calkins Lacombe
Director of Public Health