Tennessee Institute of Public Health Awarded BlueCross BlueShield Grant

Ginny Kidwell, Director of the Tennessee Institute of Public Health, located at the ETSU College of Public Health has been awarded a major grant from the BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation.

The grant has two parts. The first is "Regional Roadmap 2: Down the Road to a Healthier Appalachia." It is a grant that will allow TNIPH to continue the highly successful Regional Roadmap to a Healthier Appalachia project. The second part is "Healthy WEST: Working to Energize and Strengthen Tennessee." This will allow TNIPH to expand the Regional Roadmap project to rural counties in west Tennessee. TNIPH received $150,000 for the two grants.

Dean Randy Wykoff said "I am really pleased that Ms. Kidwell's outstanding work with the original Regional Roadmap for a Healthier Appalachian Tennessee has met with such a positive response--from the community, and from the many organizations that helped to sponsor it."

The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Health Foundation was a major sponsor of the first project, joining the Niswonger Foundation, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Eastman Foundation. In the original proposal, the TNIPH used a mini-grant program to fund twenty community-based health initiatives in rural Appalachian Tennessee. Each initiative was a locally-generated project to improve health and welfare in the host community.

Ms. Kidwell said "The new grants will allow TNIPH to expand into fifty-two Appalachian counties in east and middle Tennessee and into twenty west Tennessee counties where similar health and economic challenges exist." She added, "The first cycle of projects documented that mini-grants can effectively support community-generated programs to improve health."

Topics covered by the first set of grants include substance abuse, cancer, diabetes, cultural factors, lack of education and economic issues.

Dean Wykoff added "I am a strong believer in mini-grants, as they empower communities to identify and address their own health priorities. That TNIPH is now being funded to expand this program across the state is a tremendous reflection on the Institute and Ms. Kidwell's outstanding leadership."