



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kathy Mitchell and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Honored as Healthy Communities Champions

Eau Claire, WI – April 27th, 2018- Kathy Mitchell and West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission were honored Thursday (April 26th) as *Healthy Communities Champions* for their efforts to make Eau Claire County a healthier place in which to live. Eau Claire's Healthy Communities coalition announced the awards during its annual celebration held at the Lismore Hotel.

Kathy Mitchell was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion in the category for individuals.* Kathy has had a long commitment to health and wellness in Eau Claire as a City Council member and member of the Board of Health. In her tenure on Council and the Board she has been a strong and consistent advocate for population health improvement and using evidence-based practices to assure the best and most sustainable outcomes. Kathy has supported work done on looking at Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool to improve the health outcomes of built environment and policy projects that the City has undertaken. She has been a strong advocate for meeting the needs of all populations in the community and has been a voice for looking at tough issues and not backing away from complicated community challenges. Of particular note was her leadership role in passing the new Eau Claire Housing Ordinance which impacts the health and safety of some of our most vulnerable residents. Kathy has been able to work as a leader, bridge-builder, and policy maker to consider important changes to community policy and practice that make a long term difference in the health of residents.



West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) was voted as the *Healthy Communities Champion in the category for organizations.* WCWRPC has or is currently undertaking a diverse range of

projects that promote healthy living among Eau Claire County residents. WCWRPC lead a team to review Safe Routes to School for all Eau Claire Area School District schools. Staff from the agency has also developed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Chippewa/Eau Claire Metro Area in an effort to highlight the assets and needs of the community related to biking and walking. In efforts to continue encouraging biking and walking, the agency is exploring funding for additional signage along bike routes and is part of a team from the community that attended a competitive national Walkability Action Institute to make progress on policy, systems, and environmental change regarding walkability in our community. Finally, WCWRPC engages in activities that support environmental health through their dedication to reducing pollution in the Eau Claire River Watershed. WCWRPC has shown strong dedication to making better health possible through improvements to where we live, work, and play.



For more information about Eau Claire Healthy Communities, visit www.ehealthycommunities.org.

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