



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Ramon Garcia
County Judge

A. C. Cuellar, Jr.
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Joseph Palacios
Commissioner, Precinct 4

Public Affairs Division
Julia Benitez Sullivan
Director

100 E. Cano St., 1st Floor
(956) 292-7026 P
(956) 292-7766 F
www.co.hidalgo.tx.us W
public.info@co.hidalgo.tx.us E

Contact: Julia Benitez Sullivan
Phone: 956.292.7026
Email: julia.sullivan@co.hidalgo.tx.us

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Texas Healthy Communities Program recognizes Hidalgo County for preventing and controlling heart disease, stroke and other chronic diseases

EDINBURG – The Texas Healthy Communities Program recognized the County of Hidalgo with a Bronze-level rating for its efforts to reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD), stroke, and other chronic diseases.

Healthy Communities is a program of the Texas Department of State Health Services, assists communities to assess their existing environments, implement changes in local environmental and policy infrastructure and adopt priority public health practices to reduce risk factors for chronic diseases and honors counties and cities that advance recognized best practices for preventing and controlling CVD, stroke and other chronic diseases.

Rachel Coughlin, a program specialist with the state, credited the Hidalgo County Health and Human Services Department for increasing the county's ranking from Honorable Mention to Bronze.

"Hidalgo County increased its score in one year by 25 points," Coughlin said. "From an Honorable Mention of 49.5 points to a Bronze of 74.5 is incredible to do within a year."

In addition to the recognition, Coughlin announced that the county would receive a \$50,000 grant in support of continued efforts to promote healthy communities.

There are four levels of recognition: Gold, Silver, Bronze and Honorable Mention. Communities are assessed on eight indicators to determine recognition as a Texas Healthy Community. Environmental indicators include offering physical activity areas, healthy eating options, mother-friendly, worksites and an evidence-based health curriculum in schools. Policy indicators include a 100% smoke free city smoking ordinance; an EMS system which maintains a rapid response time for cardiac events and treatment of stroke as a medical emergency in the community, with appropriate acute stroke treatment protocols in place.

The Texas communities recognized this year are: Harris, Nueces and Webb counties and the City of Houston at the Gold Level; Angelina, Lubbock, Parker, Taylor, and Victoria counties recognized at the Silver Level; Hidalgo, Lamar, Parker, Taylor and Victoria counties at the Bronze Level; and Ector, Jasper, Nacogdoches, Newton, Waller and Wood counties, and the Cities of Temple, Red Oak, and Waxahachie received Honorable Mentions.

###

Pictured L-R: Hidalgo County Health & Human Services Chief Administrative Officer Eduardo "Eddie" Olivarez, Texas Department of State Health Services Program Specialist Rachel Coughlin, Pct. 4 Commissioner Joseph Palacios, Pct. 3 Commissioner Joe M. Flores, Pct. 2 Commissioner Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu, Pct. 1 Commissioner A.C. Cuellar Jr., and Hidalgo County Health Department staff members Misti Palacios and Rick Salinas.

Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the 800,000 residents of our county as well as a variety of services to residents who live outside city limits. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility.