

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:**

Maribeth Woodford, 715-839-8477, ext. 202.

Nate Jahn, 715-836-8460 Ext. 114

**Executive Director of Chippewa Valley Free Clinic joins Eau Claire Healthy Communities Leadership Team**

**Eau Claire, WI-Dec. 1st, 2015-** Maribeth Woodford, Executive Director of the Chippewa Valley Free Clinic is joining Eau Claire Healthy Communities as a new Co-Chair, alongside current Co-Chair Nate Jahn, Health & Wellness Director at the Eau Claire YMCA. Woodford bring 30 years of nonprofit management; strategic and annual business to advance mission-driven priorities of Eau Claire Healthy Communities.



Eau Claire Healthy Communities is a local coalition made up of over 200 volunteers from the community working to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities of Eau Claire County through collaborative and focused action. In the 2015 Community Health Assessment, residents identified Mental Health, Alcohol Misuse and Obesity as the top three health concerns in our community. Healthy Communities currently has teams working to create action around these health priorities, as well teams addressing family violence prevention and oral health promotion. Data shows that these health areas are issues in our community:

- **High-Risk Drinking:** Alcohol-related deaths are the fourth leading cause of death in Wisconsin. While most people in Wisconsin drink responsibly, safely, and legally, Wisconsin ranks at or near the top among states in heavy alcohol drinking. High-risk drinking is an issue in Eau Claire County- 30% of residents report binge drinking compared to 23% in WI and 16% in the U.S.
- **Mental Health:** The 2011 PRIDE survey conducted in Eau Claire County high schools with 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated that approximately 1 in 6 of these students considered suicide “sometimes,” “often,” or “a lot.” Another indicator that mental health needs to be a priority in our community is the high number of self-inflicted injuries. In Eau Claire County, this number has been increasing and has exceeded the state rate since 2000.
- **Chronic Disease/Obesity:** Chronic diseases are among the most common and costly of health problems. In Eau Claire County, cancer and heart disease are the leading causes of death. 1 in 14 Eau Claire County adults are diagnosed with diabetes. 29% of Eau Claire County adults have a body mass index over 30 (considered obese).
- **Family Violence:** In 2010, there were 518 domestic violence cases and 109 sexual assault cases reported to Eau Claire County law enforcement. This does not include those incidents that were not reported, which sadly is a common occurrence.
- **Oral Health:** The CDC reports that two to five-year-olds are the only age group in this country where the incidence of tooth decay is on the rise. According to the 2010 Burden of Oral Disease in Wisconsin, about 25 % of Wisconsin’s Head Start children ages three and four have untreated decay and 33% have had cavities and now have fillings.

“Healthy Communities is committed to improving our community’s health by focus on prevention and choosing evidence-based strategies that will positively impact population health,” says Maribeth Woodford, Co-Chair of Eau Claire Healthy Communities. Find more information about Eau Claire Healthy Communities and how you can become a part of healthy change in our community at [www.ehealthycommunities.org](http://www.ehealthycommunities.org)

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