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**For Immediate Release**

**Omaha Housing Authority Embraces More Healthy Home Screenings to Care for Residents**

Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) announces enhancements to home inspection protocol with partner Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance (OHKA) to incorporate an evidence-based testing tool into OHA's high-quality home inspection process. The incorporation is a result of a multisectoral collaboration around health and housing to ensure healthier homes for more Douglas County residents in OHA single-housing units. The collaboration was led by convening nonprofit The Wellbeing Partners.

The pilot was designed to provide supportive home resources, rapid remediation of health concerns, and build OHKA's evidence-based Hazard Evaluation And Rating Test (HEART) tool into OHA's current home inspections.

The HEART tool measures seven dimensions of a healthy home and helped OHA inspectors assess properties with a healthier housing focus. The pilot was conducted in two phases of five houses each between September 2019 and January 2020. The inspection process included a pre-test, inspection and grading of each property, necessary remediations, reinspection and grading, and a post-test.

The evaluation found that the post-test of participating homes saw a significant improvement on dimensions found to be most hazardous during the pre-test (dry, safe, contaminant-free, and maintained).

Tenants were educated on the qualities of a healthy home and engaged in conversations with home inspectors about OHA vs. tenant responsibility. Tenants received a gift card and a leave-behind laminated checklist for participating in the project.

The pilot grew out of a 2017 meeting held by The Wellbeing Partners (previously Live Well Omaha) which identified health and housing as a priority. At the meeting, OHKA and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) showed maps of old stock housing and Dr. Adi Pour, Director of the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD), shared how the maps could be overlaid to show the highest incidence of chronic disease in Douglas County. As a result, DCHD, OHA, OHKA, the Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC), University of Nebraska Medical Center – Center for Reducing Health Disparities, and the City of Omaha Planning Department began meeting to develop the pilot. The pilot was evaluated by Category One Consulting and was funded by a generous grant from WELLCARE.

In next steps for 2020-2021, OHA and OHKA will develop a process to recruit OHA tenants to sign up for a HEART tool inspection. OHKA has created an online dashboard to track and analyze future HEART tool data.

OHKA and MOTAC are exploring participation in OHA tenant and landlord briefings to educate people on the benefits of healthy, smoke-free homes and buildings. The Nebraska Action Coalition – Future of Nursing will share the healthy home checklist and modify a tenant survey for improved use.

The Wellbeing Partners continues to connect partners and serve in the health and housing space. This project was made possible with funding from WELLCARE of Nebraska.

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*The Wellbeing Partners is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to build wellbeing into the way communities grow and do business by supporting the growth of a culture of wellbeing within organizations as well as acting as a convener to address local community health challenges. Relying on expertise and evidence in worksite wellness and public health, The Wellbeing Partners bridge the good work between worksite wellness initiatives and community health collaboration for the greatest impact in our communities. Based on applied practice and partner and community feedback, The Wellbeing Partners combines the eight dimensions of wellness with the social determinants of health model to shape its work so all people and places thrive.*

