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MEDIA RELEASE

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DATE: 7-13-05

Olmsted County Public Health Services Receives “Model Practice Award”

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) honors Olmsted County Public Health Services' on July 13, 2005 at the NACCHO annual conference in Boston for “excellence and continual improvement” in the County’s food protection program. Olmsted County joins a special group of public health agencies that exemplify the forward thinking, proactive attitude of our nation’s public health system,” said NACCHO President Michael Caldwell, MD, MPH. “NACCHO congratulates Olmsted County Public Health Services on this important recognition.”

Olmsted County’s food protection program entry, titled “Discovering Previously Unidentified Foodborne Illness Risks Through Discussion,” summarizes the County’s process of assisting food establishment managers develop their policies and systems that address conditions most often associated with food-borne illness. This approach typically results in longer lasting food safety improvements and it identifies about 50% more risk conditions associated with employee health, hand-washing, cooking, and cooling than traditional facility inspection models.

The methods, initiated in the late 1990’s, are under continued development with assistance by a local Food Safety Advisory Task Force that includes local food service establishment, Olmsted County Environmental Commission, and County Public Health representatives. Environmental Health Director and food program manager, Rich Peter, attributes the program’s success to “the community’s commitment to continual improvement that is shared by our local food service industry and State & local public health for protecting the public’s health.”

NACCHO’s Model Practice Awards program honors 39 initiatives in 2005, that demonstrate how local public health agencies and their community partners can effectively collaborate to address local public health concerns. A committee of peers selected Olmsted County from 106 local public health agency applicants. All award winning programs will become part of a NACCHO online, searchable database of successful public health practices including immunization, infectious disease, emergency preparedness, and maternal and child health.