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Allegacy, YMCA of NWNC Participating In Two Year Research Study

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Winston-Salem, N.C., May 18, 2017 – The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) recently awarded eight research grants to study how private-sector investment can help build a culture of health, promoting greater wellbeing and health equity for all. Allegacy Federal Credit Union and the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina are participating in a grant awarded to and conducted by the Sustainability and Health Initiative for NetPositive Enterprise (SHINE), based at the Center for Health and the Global Environment at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The grant research will highlight Allegacy's cross-sector collaboration with the YMCA of NWNC and the credit union's AllHealth Wellness Savings Account to determine whether broad impact incentives positively impact the wellbeing of diverse communities. Allegacy incentivizes its shared members through the AllHealth Wellness Account, in which members earn one of the highest dividend rates in the nation on their savings account at incrementally higher rates based on the number of visits to the YMCA of NWNC.

"This is a novel study, the first study of its kind that we know of, with huge potential to shift traditional wellness programs into the community, if these programs can deliver on the promise," said Dr. Eileen McNeely, grant recipient and co-director, SHINE. "In addition, we know less about how to lift wellbeing, including financial wellbeing, as an upstream precursor to health. We have the rare opportunity to take advantage of a natural experiment."

Researchers will examine whether staged incentives (savings account dividends) increase and sustain utilization and YMCA of NWNC engagement over time, and whether that increase corresponds to increased self-reported wellbeing in the individual member. Using surveys, wearable devices and conducting interviews, researchers will assess the relationship between

the frequency of YMCA of NWNC engagement and general wellbeing, community involvement, financial wellbeing and health.

“We are honored to be a part of this study and have long believed businesses have a unique opportunity to positively influence the overall wellbeing of not only their workforce, but the entire community,” said Cathy Pace, Allegacy President and CEO. “By participating in this research, we plan to play an influential role in the way wellbeing is being viewed in the country.

Through January 2019, the grant will study the effects of a household-wide incentive on the health and wellbeing of Allegacy members by researching the trends of their YMCA of NWNC visits, financial savings habits, and member wellbeing. Researchers will compare the patterns over time for members in the AllHealth Wellness Account to those not in the account, adjusting for major demographic and health covariates. All members of the YMCA of NWNC are eligible to open an AllHealth Wellness Account to earn the participation incentive and opt into the research project.

Allegacy’s external wellness efforts have been inspired by its internal achievements. Allegacy began its award-winning AllHealth program in 2009 with the intent to create a culture of health and wellbeing targeting much more than exercise. Since that launch, Allegacy has been named one of the Top 100 Healthiest Employers in the United States in 2014 and 2016. In 2016, Allegacy and the YMCA of NWNC partnered in the first ever cross-sector collaboration of its kind between a financial institution and a whole-health nonprofit provider.

"We are grateful and excited for the opportunity to partner with Allegacy and SHINE in such an innovative research study," said Stan Law, President and CEO, YMCA of Northwest North Carolina. "This partnership shows that, together, we can strengthen our communities, and encourage people to live healthier lives, both physically and fiscally."

About Allegacy

For 50 years, Allegacy has helped its members, employees and the communities it serves be their best by helping people make smart financial choices. By doing right, Allegacy has become one of the largest credit unions in North Carolina serving over 134,000 members worldwide with over \$1.3 billion in assets and an additional billion dollars in assets under management in its financial planning group.

With roots in Winston Salem, Allegacy has 12 convenient locations and eight high school student-run credit unions in the Triad. Allegacy offers personal and business financial services to help a broad membership base including the employees, retirees and families of over 700 companies throughout the country be their best. To learn more, visit Allegacy.org.

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