

## NEWS RELEASE

February 14, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lori Rowley RN, Public Health Nurse, 308-345-4223

### Heart Health Month

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is working with healthcare providers and other partners to reduce the rates of heart disease in southwest Nebraska. Heart disease is one of the top causes of death in southwest Nebraska and nationwide. Every 34 seconds in the United States, an adult dies from cardiovascular disease (CVD).

“We strongly encourage our residents to know their risk for heart disease,” states Lori Rowley RN, Public Health Nurse at SWNPHD. “Get health screenings regularly and talk to your doctor about your blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and other factors that could damage your blood vessels.”

Million Hearts is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2027. It is co-led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Million Hearts is promoting evidence-based strategies to prevent cardiovascular disease, including reducing your risk and improving your heart health by following the “ABCS” of heart health.

#### What are the ABCS of heart health?

- **A: Aspirin.** Take aspirin as directed by your doctor. Ask your health care professional if aspirin can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Be sure to tell your health care professional if you have a family history of heart disease or stroke.
- **B: Blood Pressure.** Control your blood pressure. Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. High blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack or stroke more than any other risk factor. Find out what your blood pressure numbers are, and ask your health care professional what those numbers mean for your health. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care professional to lower it.
- **C: Cholesterol.** Manage your cholesterol. Cholesterol is a waxy substance produced by the liver and found in certain foods. Your body needs cholesterol, but when you have too much, it can build up in your arteries and cause heart disease. Talk to your health care professional about cholesterol and how to lower your bad cholesterol if it's too high.
- **S: Don't smoke.** Smoking raises your blood pressure, which increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. If you smoke, quit. Talk with your health care professional about ways to help you stick with your decision. It's never too late to quit smoking. Visit [smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW today.

Through a grant with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, SWNPHD works with women through a program called Health Hub. Health Coaches help women to improve their heart health,

provide cholesterol and glucose health screenings, and monitor their progress toward healthy living. These cholesterol screenings are also available for employee wellness programs through SWNPHD's Target Your Health program.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website [www.swhealth.ne.gov](http://www.swhealth.ne.gov) contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, You Tube, TikTok and Instagram. SWNPHD can be reached by calling 308-345-4223, one number three locations, McCook, Imperial, and Ogallala.

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