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For immediate release

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Improving Our Health in Southwest Nebraska

Health departments are tasked with several essential elements in carrying out core functions. Some of these elements include monitoring the health of their jurisdictions to identify community health problems, educating and empowering people about health issues, and mobilizing community partners to identify and solve health problems. Over the last year Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has taken several steps to carry out these core functions.

In February we started a Community Health Assessment (CHA) process, which sought to gather data about the health and well-being of our communities. Several partners joined this process including hospitals, special and minority populations, and Board of Health members, as well as a survey sent throughout the district to gather the community's perspective about their health status, including disease, environmental conditions, and social determinants. A data specialist was used to collect additional demographic and health facts, which then allowed us to compare our condition to that of the entire state. Both the key findings and the full report can be found on our website at www.swhealth.ne.gov/aboutus/chip.

Also found on our website is our Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Several workshops were held with partners to review and discuss the assessment data gathered throughout the CHA process. From these workshops three priority areas were determined: Physical Activity, Heart Disease, and Cancer. SWNPHD will initiate activities and collaborate with other agencies in an effort to decrease the rates and prevalence of these diseases.

SWNPHD appreciates the many partners and community members who work with us to achieve better health for southwest Nebraska. There are many opportunities to participate in improving health, like joining a walking program, learning about community improvement workgroups, or sharing feedback in health assessments and surveys.

To learn more about community health or to get involved, contact Heidi Wheeler at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram or view the website at swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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