

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release
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Fight Back Against Colorectal Cancer

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) joined the annual statewide effort organized by the Nebraska Cancer Coalition (NC2) to raise awareness of lifesaving colorectal cancer screening during Colorectal Cancer Awareness month. Staff participated in Dress in Blue Day on Friday, March 3 to fight back against colorectal cancer.

“Our local health department staff wore blue to support colorectal cancer awareness,” shared Paula Wimer, Program Manager at SWNPHD. “We strongly support the Nebraska Cancer Coalition and encourage regular screenings to catch it early and make treatment easier.”

Colorectal cancer is the second deadliest cancer in Nebraska. Incidences of colorectal cancer diagnosis and death remain higher in Nebraska compared to overall U.S. rates. Additionally, rates of colorectal cancer have increased in recent decades among individuals younger than 50. So much so that the official recommended age for colorectal cancer screening has been reduced from 50 to 45.

“Colorectal cancer screening is critical, as symptoms often only become prevalent in later stages of the disease when it’s much more difficult to fight back. It’s important for Nebraskans ages 45 and older to speak with their healthcare provider about screening as soon as possible, especially those who have postponed appointments because of the pandemic,” said NC2 President Dr. Alan Thorson. “Colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable, but you don’t know if you don’t go.”

There are safe, affordable options available for screening, including at-home test kits. SWNPHD encourages residents to contact their primary care provider to start a conversation about what screening option is best for them.

SWNPHD has free home screening kits available for residents of the health district who are interested in screening for colorectal cancer. “The free kits are for anyone ages 45 to 75,” explains Wimer. “You may pick a kit up at our McCook office or call and request one at 308-345-4223. Simply follow the directions on the kit, then mail the kit in the enclosed envelope to the lab for testing. The test results will be mailed back to you to share with your doctor.”

SWNPHD is providing these FIT (fecal immunochemical test) kits through a grant from the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. For more information call Paula at 308-345-4223 or view our website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. Follow SWNPHD on Facebook and Instagram. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties.

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