



Reeves County
Hospital District

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Put Your Heart in Good Hands During American Heart Month

February is cardiovascular awareness month and a good time to give your heart to RCHD for a checkup.

PECOS, Texas (Feb 14, 2022) – You have heard the warning, don't give your heart to just anyone, but at the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, a service Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) a health wellness exam is a great first step towards heart health. The month of February is designated American Heart Month which is intended to raise awareness of the dangers of cardiovascular diseases nationwide.

"There is no better time than the month of February, to consider your overall heart health and help identify any risk factors for heart disease to stave off a serious cardiovascular event down the road," said Shellece Lowe, NP at Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, a service of Reeves County Hospital District. Exams are covered by most insurance companies as well as Medicare and Medicaid as part of your overall wellness program.

Heart disease remains the number one killer in America, she pointed out, leading to nearly 700,000 deaths on average per year from a heart attack. Deaths from COVID-19 managed to eclipse that record in 2021 but pandemic deaths, though still occurring have begun to decline, and probably restoring cardiovascular disease back to its infamous number one position.

Statistics show that approximately 85.6 million Americans live with some form of cardiovascular disease. This could include coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure or high blood pressure. Major risk factors that could lead to cardiovascular disease include high cholesterol, high blood pressure, stress, smoking, diabetes, obesity, family history of heart disease, lack of regular exercise and eating unhealthy and fatty foods.

"At RCHD we have a certified dietician on staff with another one in training," Brenda McKinney, CEO of Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) pointed out. "Professionals trained in nutrition and healthy eating habits are incredibly beneficial to our patients, especially those who are concerned about or may be experiencing cardiovascular issues."

"But first we need to know your risk level, Lowe explained. "After that, we can begin to work on the ways that will help you lower it."

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A thorough physical exam of your weight, blood pressure and cardiovascular fitness are completed to identify possible complications. A healthcare provider can advise whether you might benefit from an electrocardiogram (EKG), a test performed at RCHD that allows our medical providers to take a closer look at your heart's performance.

Medical providers can prescribe appropriate medications for those at high risk of heart disease. In addition to medication, a diet planned out by your primary care provider and the RCHD staff and a specifically designed exercise program are the key elements to helping fashion a lifestyle change that is intended to take the individual out of harm's way of bringing on a heart event.

Exercise will be a major part of the plan. Those who are physically active are twice as likely to prevent a heart attack. According to the American Heart Association, exercise is beneficial in the long run as it decreases the risk of developing cardiovascular disease and other medical related illnesses.

Physical activity can improve the condition of both your heart and lungs. Exercise routines should be brisk enough to raise your heart and breathing rates, sustained for at least 30 minutes without interruption and repeated at least three to five times per week.

"Good heart health is important year-round," Lowe acknowledged. "But especially during the month of February when the focus is on heart health awareness, it is important to look after perhaps your body's most vital organ."

For more information about cardiovascular disease talk with your primary care provider at Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic (432) 447-0565.

About Reeves County Hospital District

Reeves County Hospital District (RCHD) provides healthcare services for people in Reeves County and neighboring communities in West Texas. Founded in 1954, RCHD, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers a wide variety of medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic radiology, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory and more. RCHD also operates American Home Health and Hospice and the Pecos Valley Rural Health Clinic, which offers family care, immunizations and other medical services. For more information, please visit www.reevescountyhospital.com.

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