



Press Release
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Cardiac Program in Pecos Helps Reduce Future Heart Attacks

Program is available at Reeves Regional Health

PECOS, Texas (February 12, 2024) – As February unfolds, the spotlight continues to shine on cardiovascular health. This month, recognized as American Heart Month, offers an opportunity to emphasize the importance of heart health and preventative measures against cardiovascular diseases. Reeves Regional Health (RRH) underscores the significance of cardiac rehabilitation in mitigating risks and promoting heart wellness.

"American Heart Month serves as a vital reminder of the ongoing battle against cardiovascular diseases," states Dennis Alibangbang, PT, DPT, Director of Cardiac Rehabilitation at RRH. "Through education and proactive healthcare initiatives, we work to empower individuals in our community to take charge of their cardiovascular well-being."

Since its inception in the early 1960s, American Heart Month has served as a beacon for healthcare providers nationwide to advocate for heart health awareness and preventative measures. RRH aligns with this mission by encouraging consistent dialogue between individuals and their primary care providers regarding cardiovascular health.

Heart disease remains a formidable adversary, with heart attacks striking every 40 seconds in the United States. Survivors face the critical task of reclaiming cardiovascular health and minimizing the risk of future incidents. Cardiac rehabilitation emerges as a cornerstone in this journey, offering tailored programs and lifestyle adjustments to facilitate recovery and long-term heart wellness.

"Heart attacks are always serious and can have a big effect on your life," explains Alibangbang. "If you survive your first heart attack, it is possible to go on to live a full and productive life, but you will likely need to make lifestyle changes and undergo a rehabilitation program to improve your overall health."

Heart disease continues to threaten Americans across the country, accounting for one in every four deaths. Knowing how to make the medical- and lifestyle-related decisions to better your health is critical. For Reeves County residents with heart-related ailments, Reeves Regional Health offers a comprehensive program that could be a lifeline.

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"Knowing more about heart disease and how it might affect you is critical, especially given its prevalence in the U.S. and here at home our region," explains Alibangbang added. "Once individuals realize that they may be at risk for heart disease, they tend to pay more attention to their health and follow the advice of their medical providers."

Cardiovascular disease is a group of conditions affecting the heart and blood vessels. The disease includes a variety of conditions, such as coronary artery disease, heart failure, stroke, peripheral artery disease, and arrhythmias. The underlying cause of cardiovascular disease is often atherosclerosis, a condition in which fatty deposits build up in the inner walls of the arteries, reducing blood flow to the heart, brain, and other organs.

Responding to cardiovascular disease is just as important as prevention. At RRH, healthcare professionals have a comprehensive approach to the new cardiovascular rehabilitation program.

RRH began serving patients from a new 140,000-square-foot medical campus in November 2022, replacing a nearly 45-year-old hospital nearing the end of its usage. Planning the new campus allowed local healthcare officials to reimagine local healthcare and design the facility from the ground up with programs and services essential for Reeves County residents today and for generations to come.

The cardiac rehabilitation program provides a multidisciplinary approach to helping patients better recover from cardiovascular disease or cardiac-related events, such as heart attack, heart surgery, or stroke. Participating in a cardiac rehabilitation program improves overall physical and mental health while reducing the risk of future cardiac events.

The prevalence of cardiovascular disease in Texas remains high. In 2020, an estimated 5.5 million adults in Texas reported having been diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, approximately 25 percent of the adult population. The prevalence of cardiovascular disease is higher among older adults and individuals with certain risk factors, such as obesity, hypertension, and diabetes.

How individuals respond to cardiovascular-related conditions can make a difference in outcomes.

According to a CDC study, individuals who participated in a cardiac rehabilitation program were more likely to avoid subsequent heart attacks than those who did not participate in a program or only

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attended a few times. In the CDC study, the heart attack rate was consistently lower among individuals who participated in more than 24 sessions and highest among those who participated in fewer than 12 sessions.

One way to understand your risk of cardiovascular disease is to talk with your primary care provider about your family history and current health status.

"Discussing your risks and preventative measures with your medical provider is critical," Alibangbang says. "A great time to discuss heart disease is during your next appointment with your primary care physician or during your annual wellness check."

Medicare and most private insurance plans cover all or part of cardiac rehab programs. Patients typically qualify if their medical history or condition includes a heart attack, congestive heart failure, or heart surgery, to name a few.

A referral by a medical provider to the cardiac rehabilitation program is required. Talk with your cardiologist or primary care provider for more information about cardiovascular disease and whether the cardiopulmonary rehabilitation program may benefit you.

About Reeves Regional Health

Reeves Regional Health (RRH), formally known as Reeves County Hospital District, provides healthcare services for Reeves County and neighboring West Texas communities. Founded in 1954, RRH, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers various medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RRH also operates Reeves Regional Home Health and Hospice, and Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic. In November 2022, RRH began serving patients from a new \$115 million, 140,000-square-foot campus. For more information, please visit www.reevesregional.com.

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