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Contact: Michele Bever, PhD, MPH, Executive Director
Dorrann Hultman, RN, Public Health Nurse
402-462-6211 or toll free at 1-877-238-7595

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Women – Take Steps to Better Health

Women, listen up! Health director Michele Bever said that “Moms can act like superheroes, taking care of everything and everybody. But moms need to take care of themselves, too.”

Dr. Bever, executive director for South Heartland District Health Department, is encouraging women in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties to take some steps to better health. “National Women’s Health Week begins on Mother’s Day, May 14,” she said, “and we’ve got some hints for women of all ages to take steps for better health.”

“First of all,” said Dorrann Hultman, RN, and community health services coordinator for South Heartland, “age is just a number! You’re never too young or too old to be your healthiest you.”

If women don’t know where to start, or they need help setting or meeting their health goals, Hultman suggests looking at options under these three big steps to better health:

Step 1. Get the health care you need: Schedule your annual well-woman visit with your healthcare provider. Regular check-ups are important to keep disease away or detect problems early, when treatment is more effective. Most insurance plans cover a yearly physical and blood work under preventive care.

Step 2. Make healthy choices: Heart disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death in women. By taking control of your health and making healthy lifestyle choices, you can reduce your risk for these diseases. For example, set goals to get moving more, stock your kitchen to enjoy more healthy foods, get enough sleep every night, and find a healthy way to cope with stress.

Step 3. Protect yourself: Make sure you are up-to-date on your immunizations, including your yearly flu shots and HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer. Protect your skin and eyes from the sun, avoiding sunburns and checking yourself monthly for skin changes that might lead to skin cancer. And don’t forget about protecting yourself by always wearing your seat belt, driving the speed limit and committing to no cell phone use while driving.

Hultman says that most women know what they need to do to be healthier, but sometimes it is hard for them to get started or to keep going once they start. “Life often gets in the way,” she said. “So a nice way to honor the women in your family this Mother’s Day would be to ask them what their health goals are and then pledge to help them meet those goals.”