

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

For more information, contact: **Jessica Davies or Tabi Prochazka**, 308-487-3600 or 866-701-7173

Every year on January 1, Panhandle residents make resolutions. *Quit smoking. Lose weight. Get healthy.*

Then every year on January 12, the majority give up. They give up because quitting smoking, losing weight and getting healthy are not easy tasks and we need support. Panhandle Public Health District is one resource in western Nebraska to make changing those three lifestyle areas easier.

"The three biggest risk factors for the #1 killer, cardiovascular disease, are poor physical activity and nutrition and smoking," Jessica Davies, wellness coordinator at PPHD said. Finding time and energy to get moving is harder when the weather is colder outside, so January can be a difficult time to be active, but don't give up."

Dr. Ann Kulze, who presented *Eat Right for Lift* in three Panhandle locations this past fall, stated in her recent newsletter, "I am **100 percent convinced** that good quality sleep and optimal mental health are simply unattainable unless the body gets a certain threshold amount of daily physical activity (I would say that 30 minutes of moderate activity is the bare minimum). In other words if you are not physically fit, you have likely never experienced just how restfully you could be sleeping and just how happy and "alive" you could feel." The National Sleep Foundation recommends adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night.

Get moving! Many local schools allow community members to use their gyms for early morning walking or running, some Panhandle communities have beautiful physical activity centers, and others have excellent trail systems well-maintained by city crews. Whatever your forte, "just move it."

Adults should be getting their daily dose of physical activity at least 30 minutes and children getting at least 60 minutes most days of the week. This can be done all at once or broken into segments completed throughout each day. Simply using your work breaks for brief bouts of exercise, parking further away from the store, and choosing the stairs instead of the elevator are all great ways to increase your daily activity levels.

Proper nutrition complements a physically active lifestyle. Simple changes in food choices can go a long ways-choose butter-free popcorn vs. chips, whole wheat bread vs. white, or have a side salad instead of French fries. Eat a variety of fruits and veggies each day whether they are fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or 100% juice. Limit soda intake as well. It provides no nutritional value and should be replaced with water.

For those with a nicotine habit, Tobacco Free Nebraska offers the quit line, a toll free number 800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) for smokers to call for immediate support. "Calls are answered by trained cessation counselors who give you a choice of services, including: telephone counseling;

self-help materials; referrals to community programs; or a combination of these,” Tabi Prochazka, environmental coordinator with PPHD said.

“Tobacco Free Nebraska also has an online cessation support group and a texting service. Text IMREADY to 39649 for texts to help you keep on track.”

Be sure to tap into your social networks. Friends, family, and coworkers can provide a significant amount of support when working towards a behavior change. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is an excellent resource to help build cultures of lifestyle wellness at the worksite. More information can be found at www.pphd.org/pwwc.html.

For additional information about quitting smoking, improving physical activity and nutrition, visit www.pphd.org. The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.