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SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

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**SEDGWICK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES CITIZENS TO
MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE**

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it is estimated that 33 percent of American adults have high blood pressure or hypertension. High blood pressure increases one's chance for developing heart disease, stroke and other serious conditions. According to the US National Vital Statistics Reports, heart disease was the leading cause of death in Sedgwick County and stroke was the fourth leading cause in 2005.

Unfortunately many people are not even aware they have high blood pressure. High blood pressure can develop at any age, even in children. Therefore, it is important for all persons to know his/her blood pressure level and check it regularly.

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the artery walls. It is often referred to as two numbers: the first number is the pressure when the heart contracts (systolic pressure), and the second number represents the pressure when the heart rests between beats (diastolic pressure).

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- High blood pressure for adults occurs when the systolic blood pressure measures 140 or higher or the diastolic blood pressure is 90 or higher.
- Normal blood pressure occurs when systolic blood pressure is less than 120 and the diastolic blood pressure is less than 80.
- Individuals with a blood pressure between 120 and 140 systolic and 80 and 90 diastolic are exhibiting Prehypertension. These individuals are at increased risk for developing high blood pressure.

Individuals can reduce their chances for high blood pressure and control existing blood pressure issues through behavior changes. These changes include maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, keeping a healthy diet, controlling diabetes, and avoiding tobacco and excessive alcohol. Occasionally, high blood pressure must be controlled through medication. Consult your primary care provider to determine what actions are needed for you to maintain a healthy blood pressure level.

If you are not aware of your blood pressure level, the Sedgwick County Health Department can help. Blood pressure screenings can be done through the walk-in clinic (2716 W Central) without an appointment. The mobile clinic also offers this service. Call 660-7300 for details regarding the mobile clinic schedule or visit www.sedgwickcounty.org/healthdept/healthaccess.asp. Blood pressure screenings cost \$12.

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