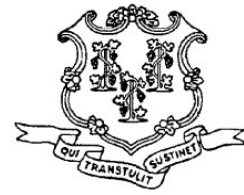


News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 22, 2005

Connecticut Department of Public Health

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Diabetes Alert Day

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) announced that March 22, 2005 is recognized as Diabetes Alert Day, and urged all Connecticut residents to increase their awareness of diabetes and assess their risk of developing this disease.

Uncontrolled diabetes can lead to heart disease and stroke, kidney disease, blindness and lower extremity amputations. “If you are over 45 years of age, overweight, have high blood pressure, or a family history of diabetes you can be one of the many who have diabetes and don’t know it,” stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin. “With early detection and treatment, many can prevent the devastating effects of the disease.”

Diabetes is a common, serious and costly disease in Connecticut that affects approximately 173,000 residents, one-third of whom do not know that they have the disease. The seventh leading cause of death in Connecticut, diabetes is a leading cause of blindness among working adults, is a major cause of kidney failure, and causes 70% of all lower extremity amputations. Diabetes is also a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Connecticut’s Black and Hispanic populations suffer disproportionately from diabetes. Blacks and Hispanics have about twice the rate of diabetes-related hospitalizations compared with white, non-Hispanics in Connecticut. Black residents have the highest death and premature mortality rates due to diabetes and diabetes-related causes of all racial/ethnic subpopulations in the state.

In addition to diabetes, 41 million Americans are living with pre-diabetes, a condition where blood sugar levels are above normal but are not at the level for a diagnosis of diabetes. Individuals with pre-diabetes are at much greater risk for developing diabetes.

Diabetes can be prevented or at least significantly delayed with lifestyle changes including an activity program and a healthy diet. Working with health care and community partners, DPH is working on diabetes prevention and control initiatives across the state, including increasing the rate of eye and foot exams as well as maintaining a diabetes surveillance system.

Individuals at risk for diabetes or pre-diabetes should ask their doctor if they should get a blood sugar test. If the results indicate diabetes or pre-diabetes, they should ask for a referral for diabetes education and /or nutrition counseling. For more information on diabetes and pre-diabetes go to www.diabetes.org or call 1-800-DIABETES

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