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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November is National Diabetes Month

Coldwater, MI. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. One in 11 adults living in Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Counties has Diabetes – that’s approximately 7,750 adults. Another 20,000 adults in the tri-counties are at-risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. In recognition of November as National Diabetes Month, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency wants you to understand the risks associated with developing Diabetes.

Diabetes means your blood sugar, also known as blood glucose, is too high. According to Rebecca Burns, Health Officer for the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency, “In 2014, 64 people living in the tri-counties died from Diabetes, making it the 7th leading cause of death for the health jurisdiction. Yet, Type 2 Diabetes is seen a disease that mostly can be prevented.”

People with Diabetes either don’t make enough insulin (Type 1 Diabetes) or can’t use insulin properly (Type 2 Diabetes). Insulin allows blood sugar (glucose) to enter cells, where it can be used for energy. When the body doesn’t have enough insulin or can’t use it effectively, blood sugar builds up in the blood. High blood sugar levels can lead to heart disease, stroke, blindness, kidney failure, and amputation of toes, feet, or legs.

Type 2 Diabetes accounts for about 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of Diabetes, and type 1 Diabetes accounts for about 5%. Unfortunately, the health and economic costs for both are enormous:

- Diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death in the United States.
- Diabetes is the leading cause of kidney failure, lower-limb amputations, and adult-onset blindness.
- According to the American Diabetes Association, people diagnosed with Diabetes can expect to spend, on average, about **\$7,900** each year just for their Diabetes care (2012).

People who have one or more of the following risk factors should talk to their doctor about getting their blood sugar tested:

- Being overweight.
- Being 45 years or older.
- Having a family history of type 2 Diabetes.
- Being physically active less than 3 times a week.
- Ever having gestational Diabetes or giving birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds.

To learn more about Diabetes, check out our website at www.bhsj.org and click on the Quick Info About Health Topics button. We also have some healthy eating and lifestyle information available on our Six Weeks to Wellness page which can be accessed by clicking on the Quick Links for Employees link. Both pages can provide you with the basic information you need to start making healthy changes that can help reduce your risk for Diabetes, improve your health and extend your life.

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