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"Your Local
Health Department"

NEWS RELEASE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Waiting Until After the Holidays to Catch Up on Your Sleep?

Sturgis, MI. With the holidays approaching at laser speed, people tend to skimp on sleep to keep up. But is that the healthiest choice? The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency asks "Did you get enough sleep last night?" If not, you are part of the 35% of U.S. adults that are not getting the recommended 7 hours of sleep each night (CDC, 2014).

Based on the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society recommendations, adults, aged 18–60 years, should sleep at least 7 hours each night to promote optimal health and well-being. Sleeping less than seven hours per day is associated with an increased risk of developing chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and frequent mental distress. "We are all prone to think we can drink a little more caffeine and we will be okay. But recent studies indicate otherwise." states Dr. H. Lauren Vogel, D.O., Medical Director for the tri-county health department.

The AAA Foundation for Travel Safety has just released a study where it found that a lack of sleep can lead to 'drowsy driving', a condition that has proved to be as risky as driving drunk. Dr. Vogel further explains. "Missing just a few hours of sleep at night can significantly increase your risk of being involved in a vehicle crash. Crash rates increase for every hour of sleep lost – so if you only get 4 to 5 hours of sleep, your risk of being involved in a vehicle crash quadruples compared to a person who got the recommended seven hours." The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety indicates that 35,000 people die in US car crashes each year and estimates that 1 in 5 fatal crashes involved a drowsy driver.

To assist people in developing healthy sleep habits, the tri-county health department, along with the CDC, recommends:

- *Be consistent.* Go to bed at the same time each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing, and at a comfortable temperature
- Remove electronic devices, such as TVs, computers, and smart phones, from the bedroom
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime
- Avoid tobacco/nicotine
- Get some exercise. Being physically active during the day can help you fall asleep more easily at night.
- Keep a journal of your sleep patterns to discuss with your doctor.
- If you are traveling a great distant by car, consider taking short 10-20 minute naps every couple of hours to improve your ability to drive without crashing.

If you still have trouble sleeping, discuss your sleep with your doctor. Before your appointment, keep a 10-day sleep journal or diary to share with your doctor that includes when you:

1. Go to bed
2. Fall asleep
3. Wake up
4. Get out of bed
5. Take naps
6. Exercise
7. Drink alcohol
8. Consume caffeine-containing beverages

For more information on CDC's Sleep and Sleep Disorders Program, please visit www.cdc.gov/sleep. To learn more about how to prevent disease and injury, visit the health department's website at www.bhsj.org or like their facebook page at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic. Give yourself the gift of sleep this Christmas... it will improve your health!

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