



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2009

Contact: Nikki Hillier, Program
Coordinator - (217) 531-2914;
Lori A. Holmes, Public Relations
(217) 531-2927

CUPHD Celebrates American Diabetes Alert Day with Diabetes Campaign for Seniors

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Encourages Local Seniors to Take
Advantage of Medicare Diabetes Screening Benefits*

Champaign, IL – Tuesday, March 24, 2009 marks the 21st Annual American Diabetes Alert Day. The American Diabetes Alert Day is a one-day, “wake-up” call to inform the American public about the seriousness of diabetes, particularly when diabetes is left undiagnosed and untreated. The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) would like to take this day to encourage local seniors to take advantage of Medicare Diabetes Screening Benefits.

In October 2008, CUPHD surveyed local seniors to determine the best way to communicate the seriousness of diabetes and the screening benefits available through Medicare. These surveys allowed CUPHD to launch a very successful diabetes benefits campaign in November 2008. In honor of American Diabetes Day, CUPHD will re-introduce the campaign in the Round Barn in Champaign. Round Barn was the first site to volunteer to take part in the CUPHD surveys, and the opinions of the residents were instrumental in developing the CUPHD diabetes campaign.

“CUPHD is very excited to bring this campaign to Round Barn”, said Theresa Truelove, Certified Diabetes Educator and Public Health Nurse for the Division of Wellness & Health Promotion at CUPHD. “Diabetes is a serious disease that affects many seniors, yet very few take advantage of the screening benefits provided by Medicare. CUPHD hopes that residents of Round Barn will see the new diabetes awareness campaign, and be proud that their original input has been used to help other seniors in their community.”

The CUPHD diabetes awareness campaign includes a colorful 6 foot tall banner stand, numerous counter cards, posters, flyers and customer tear-offs. Campaign materials have been placed in community locations most frequented by seniors including senior living facilities, doctor’s offices, pharmacies, restaurants, churches, libraries, grocery stores and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District.

Diabetes is a serious disease that strikes nearly 24 million people in the United States. It is called the “silent killer” because nearly one-fourth of those with the disease (5.7 million) do not know they have it. For many, diagnosis may come seven to ten years after the onset of the disease. Early diagnosis is critical to successful treatment and delaying or preventing the complications of diabetes which can include heart disease, blindness, kidney disease, stroke, amputation and death.

Beginning in 2005, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) began offering coverage under Medicare for screening for diabetes and pre-diabetes. The government’s goal was twofold: to encourage diabetes prevention among those found to have pre-diabetes, and to identify people who were unaware they already had diabetes so that they could begin treatment and potentially stave off the serious complications of the disease.

For more information on diabetes or any other CUPHD program, please contact CUPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit CUPHD on the web at www.c-uphd.org .

###