



For **Immediate Release**
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Being Prepared Starts at Home

“Disasters Happen. Prepare Now. Learn How.” These are the themes for National Preparedness Month throughout September 2018.

“This year we are encouraging you to ‘get your own house in order’ first, then do what you can for your community,” said Jim Morgan, public health risk coordinator for South Heartland District Health Department. “You need to make and practice your plan as a first step,” he said.

The South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD) is encouraging residents in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties to “prepare now” and “learn how,” by starting at home.

“One step in getting your own house in order is to think through those things we often take for granted,” Morgan said. “Checking your insurance coverage is one of them. Making sure you have saved a little money for an emergency is another.”

“Saving for a ‘rainy day’ is important because that rainy day may include a tornado or damaging wind,” Morgan said. “After a disaster hits, it is too late to find out if you have the right coverage.”

While it may be difficult to save very much at a time, Morgan encourages residents to approach it the same way the health department recommends creating an Emergency Preparedness Kit. “You put away a little (money or supplies) at a time, until you have what you need,” Morgan said.

Morgan said that household preparedness should include having a preparedness kit ready and available. “It may be needed at any time,” he said. “The kits should include food, water, medications and other items.” He added that a full list of items to consider including in an emergency preparedness kit is available on SHDHD’s website (southheartlandhealth.org).

Another way to put your own house in order is to learn life-saving skills. Morgan suggests that these skills include mental health first aid training. “People react in different ways to a disaster,” he said. “Training in mental health first aid teaches us to watch for signs that others need help. Recognizing and responding to others who might be experiencing mental distress helps assure a better recovery following a disaster.”

Morgan recommends learning more about steps to take to prepare for disasters by visiting ready.gov or the health department’s website: southheartlandhealth.org.

“Disasters do happen,” he said. “We do need to prepare now.”
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