



For **Immediate Release**
Date: **August 31, 2018**
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 402-462-6211 or toll free at 1-877-238-7595

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Community is invited to help set Health Priorities

“What are the most pressing health issues in our four-county health district?” “What health priorities should we focus on as a community over the next 3-5 years?”

Michele Bever, Executive Director for South Heartland District Health Department (SHDHD), plans to ask these questions on two Tuesdays, September 18th and 25th, when community members and leaders will be assisting SHDHD to evaluate and prioritize health issues. These two meetings will be the culmination of more than 8 months of planning and gathering data and opinion through three types of assessments.

“The assessments looked at the population’s health status in Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties,” said Bever, “as well as what people think is important about their communities, what external changes and conditions are likely to impact the population’s health in the future, and how the public accesses health care.”

According to Bever, the top 4-5 health issues will serve as the basis for a new community health improvement plan. “Choosing priorities allows us, along with our community partners, to focus our combined efforts on those issues that are most important to the community. With a concerted approach to strategies, time and resources, we are more likely to make progress and to make a bigger impact.”

Goals in the previous health improvement plan addressed five overarching issues including obesity, cancer, mental health, substance abuse and access to care.

The cycle of community assessment, health improvement planning, and action is standard practice for public health departments. “We go through this comprehensive process every 5-6 years to review how we are doing, identify new health issues, set priorities, and then make a plan to address those priorities,” Bever said.

The assessment process has required teamwork from key partners from all four counties who have been serving on a core planning team, including representation from Brodstone Memorial Hospital, Webster County Community Hospital, Mary Lanning Healthcare, and Clay County community members.

“Our core planning team has been coordinating the assessment process” said Bever, “but it is a community-based process. We gather information with, and about, our communities. And now, this month, our many community partners will help determine what the community health priorities will be

for the next 6 years. Then, together, we'll develop a plan to address those priorities. " Bever said the new Community Health Improvement Plan will be ready in early 2019.

Community members are invited to participate in the Priority Setting meetings.

Please register to attend these events, by calling Amy or RSVP on-line with your reservation by September 11, 2018: 402-462-6211 / 1-877-238-7595 or <http://southheartlandhealth.org> (click on "We Need Your Input") so that we may plan for you at one of the meeting sites:

(1) Access to Care Priority Setting Meetings

Date: Tuesday, September 18, 9 am – 12:00 pm. Locations in Hastings, Clay Center, Superior and Red Cloud.

(Registration begins at 8:30, we will begin promptly at 9:00 am. Refreshments will be provided. Lunch is not included.)

Agenda topics: Present/review health system assessment results, local experts provide "state of the issue" comments, participants help prioritize health system gaps, barriers to access.

(2) Health Priorities Priority Setting Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 25, 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. *(Registration begins at 8:00, we will begin promptly at 8:30 am. Refreshments will be provided. Lunch is not included.)*

Locations: Brodstone Hospital, Webster County Community Hospital, Clay Center Community Room, and Mary Lanning Healthcare

Agenda topics: Present/review assessment results, local experts provide "state of the issue" comments, priority scoring of community health issues. Examples of health Issues to be reviewed: Aging Problems, Injury, Cardiovascular Health, Child Abuse, Mental Health, Environmental Health, Diabetes, Cancer, Obesity, and Alcohol/Tobacco/Other Drug Use.

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