

Nov. 19, 2008

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Health Department receives grant to expand diabetes education

The Gulf Coast Diabetes Foundation will make a formal presentation of a \$1,200 check to the Sarasota County Health Department on Monday, Nov. 24 at 10:30 a.m. The presentation which coincides with the November American Diabetes Month observance, will take place in the parking lot of the Selby Goodwill GoodNeighbor Center, 1781 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Sarasota. The grant will expand the health department's ability to provide diabetes education to clients served through the Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit. The mobile medical unit travels to sites in north Sarasota including the Selby Goodwill GoodNeighbor Center each month to provide diabetes (blood sugar) testing along with a variety of other health screenings.

Representatives of the Gulf Coast Diabetes Foundation board of directors will join executive director Walter Konrady and Sarasota County Health and Human Services executive director, Bill Little, in providing brief remarks highlighting the long-standing relationship that the health department has had with the Foundation. Bill Little will also discuss the importance of community partnerships in helping people to get needed medical care. Mr. Konrady encourages organizations to support the health department's endeavors which help people to address health issues at their earliest treatable stage.

Studies show that people who learn how to keep their blood sugar at stable levels are less likely to experience circulation problems that adversely affect the eyes, kidneys, heart and extremities. Healthcare providers agree that much of the work of managing diabetes rests on the individual. Therefore, it is essential that those living with diabetes have the skills and resources to effectively balance insulin (medication), food intake and physical activity on a daily basis and to monitor progress at regular intervals.

Since early 2007, Health In Motion Mobile Medical Unit staff have been providing diabetes testing along with a range of other health screenings to uninsured and underinsured residents who have limited access to health care services. The goal is to assist residents in finding a permanent health care provider to meet their ongoing health needs.

Local public health officials are enthusiastic about having funding support from The Gulf Coast Diabetes Foundation as they look at ways to enhance existing services. For more information about the Health In Motion, call 941-861-5000 or visit the Sarasota County Health Department's website, www.sarasotahealth.org.