



Press Release
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Reeves Regional Health Advocates for Cancer Awareness During February

Screenings are key to early detection and better outcomes.

PECOS, Texas (Feb 19, 2024) – While February is widely recognized for heart disease awareness, Reeves Regional Health urges the public not to overlook the significance of cancer prevention and awareness during this month. According to recent statistics from the American Cancer Society, cancer remains a major health concern in the United States, responsible for approximately 600,000 deaths annually, trailing closely behind heart disease as the second leading cause of death in the nation.

Orville Cerna, MD, Internal Medicine physician, at Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic, emphasizes the importance of acknowledging both heart disease and cancer during February. "While heart disease rightfully receives considerable attention due to its devastating impact, we must also recognize the significant burden that cancer places on individuals, families, and communities across the country," states Dr. Cerna. "Cancer prevention and awareness initiatives are crucial in combating this disease and reducing its toll on public health."

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is dedicated to advancing the science of cancer prevention, collaborating with various partners in biomedical research to develop innovative strategies and therapeutics aimed at halting cancer progression. Dr. Cerna underscores the importance of research in cancer prevention, stating, "By investing in research and fostering collaboration within the scientific community, we can develop effective strategies to prevent cancer and improve patient outcomes."

Adopting healthy behavior plays a pivotal role in reducing the risk of cancer and improving overall health. Dr. Cerna emphasizes the significance of lifestyle modifications in cancer prevention, stating, "Healthy habits such as maintaining a balanced diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and avoiding tobacco use can significantly reduce the risk of developing various types of cancer."

Tobacco use remains a leading cause of preventable cancer deaths in the United States, contributing to approximately 30% of all cancer-related mortalities. Dr. Cerna stresses the importance of tobacco cessation efforts, stating, "Eliminating tobacco use is paramount in reducing the burden of cancer and preventing numerous cancer types, including lung cancer."

Furthermore, poor dietary choices, sedentary lifestyles, and obesity are significant risk factors for cancer, accounting for approximately 20% of cancer cases nationwide. Dr. Cerna highlights the

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importance of addressing these modifiable risk factors, stating, "By promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors and raising awareness about the link between diet, physical activity, and cancer risk, we can empower individuals to make informed choices that support cancer prevention."

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun or indoor tanning is a significant risk factor for skin cancer, the most common cancer in the United States. Dr. Cerna underscores the importance of sun-safe practices and avoiding indoor tanning devices to reduce the incidence of skin cancer, stating, "Simple measures such as wearing sunscreen, seeking shade, and avoiding indoor tanning can significantly lower the risk of developing skin cancer."

Screening for colorectal cancer, cervical cancer and breast cancer are instrumental in early detection and prevention. Dr. Cerna highlights the effectiveness of screening modalities such as mammograms, colonoscopy and Pap tests in detecting precancerous abnormalities and reducing cancer mortality rates, stating, "Routine cancer screening can significantly improve patient outcomes by enabling early detection and timely intervention."

Reeves Regional Health urges individuals to prioritize cancer prevention and awareness during February and beyond. By fostering collaboration, promoting healthy lifestyle behaviors, and advocating for early detection strategies, we can make significant strides in reducing the burden of cancer and improving public health outcomes.

For more information on cancer prevention and screening initiatives, please contact Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic at 432-447-0565.

About Reeves Regional Health

Reeves Regional Health (RRH), formally known as Reeves County Hospital District, provides healthcare services for Reeves County and neighboring West Texas communities. Founded in 1954, RRH, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers various medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RRH also operates Reeves Regional Home Health and Hospice, and Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic. In November 2022, RRH began serving patients from a new \$115 million, 140,000-square-foot campus. For more information, please visit www.reevesregional.com.

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