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For immediate release

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We Are All Public Health

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) is celebrating National Public Health Week, and wants to remind everyone that we are all a part of public health. One of the goals of public health is to work with our communities to make our neighborhoods a healthy place to live. Where we live – where we eat, sleep, work, play, learn, and pray – can have a huge effect on our health.

But what makes a neighborhood healthy? Having safe places to live, without hazards or pollution. Having safe ways for everyone to be active, like sidewalks, and safe places to bike. Having easy access to fresh, affordable, nutritious food. When our neighborhoods are healthy, we have the building blocks for healthy lives.

Who can make our neighborhoods healthier? You can! There are many ways to get involved right where you live. Here are a few ideas to get started.

- **Plant vegetables, trees, and other greenery.** Green spaces have been shown to reduce your risk of death. They also help to protect from rising heat, reduce pollution and offer nice space for people to connect with each other. If you don't have a yard to plant in, work with a local organization to plant in public spaces.
- **Get to know your neighbors.** Social cohesion means you're connected with the people who live near you. Feeling connected to each other is an investment in your community. It's also great for kids to have adults who care about them.
- **Get moving with your community.** People who live in rural communities often don't have sidewalks or other safe places to walk or run. Community walking groups can make getting exercise a safer and fun activity.
- **Bring healthy, fresh food where people are.** If there aren't nearby stores where people can easily purchase healthy foods, open a farmers market and allow people to use their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits there.

SWNPHD appreciates the many organizations and community members that work with us to achieve better health for southwest Nebraskans. "During National Public Health Week, we celebrate our work and share with the public about the role of public health," states Myra Stoney,

SWNPHD Health Director. “Public health promotes healthy lifestyles, prevents the spread of disease, and protects the health of all people.”

For more information or to get involved contact SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. You can follow us on Facebook, TikTok, YouTube and Instagram or view the website at www.swhealth.ne.gov which contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health.

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