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Valleywide Diabetes Rate to be Addressed in HARC 2010 Health Study
More than 50,000 People Diagnosed in Most Recent Survey

(PALM DESERT, CA) – In the midst of their 2010 study of healthcare needs across Eastern Riverside County, field researchers for the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) are paying particularly close attention to incidence rates for a wide range of medical conditions, including diabetes.

In its landmark 2007 survey, the most current information available for the region, HARC found that 9.5% or an estimated 50,118 adults cope with some form of diabetes. Researchers are currently gathering field data to determine whether those numbers are increasing or decreasing.

The levels of diabetes here are especially concerning because they prove to be higher than the national average. In 2007, the Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that approximately 23.6 million or 7.8% of all Americans suffer from the illness.

In financial terms, the CDC data shows that the indirect and direct cost for diabetes treatment nationwide stood at \$174 billion in 2007. Of that amount, direct medical costs totaled \$116 billion. Meanwhile, the average medical expenditures among people diagnosed with diabetes were 2.3 times higher than what the expenses would be in the absence of diabetes.

Diabetes represents a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from deficiencies in insulin production, insulin action, or both. The condition can lead to serious complications such as heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, lower extremity amputations, and premature death.

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Glen Grayman, MD, Board President of HARC, said “It is concerning to know that so many individuals in our communities are diabetic. With the new findings, to be released in 2011, we will be able to see whether or not the statistics have lowered at all.”

When taking race, age, and gender into account, HARC’s 2007 data revealed that Caucasians are only slightly more likely than Hispanic/Latinos to be diagnosed with diabetes. The occurrence of diabetes in Eastern Riverside County is highest among those citizens 75 years and older, followed by 45-54, and 65-74. Meanwhile, the study found that the correlation between gender and diabetes does not seem to be relevant.

HARC also looked at the socioeconomic status of those diagnosed with diabetes and discovered that individuals with lower household incomes (under \$25,000) are more likely to develop the condition than are those individuals with higher incomes. Additionally, individuals who failed to complete high school are at a greater risk for being diagnosed with the illness later in life.

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About HARC

Formed in 2006 by a consortium of more than 30 public and private healthcare agencies, the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) conducts a confidential community health status assessment in eastern Riverside County every 3 years to identify major health and quality of life issues. The nonprofit 501©3 organization is funded in part by contributions from community partners, as well as entities who contract with the agency for customized public health research. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at (760) 404-1945, or visiting the organization’s website at www.harcddata.org.