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Special Day Set to Promote Health Checkups

As a part of the national Closing the Health Gap campaign to promote disease prevention and regular health care for racial and ethnic minorities, the Oak Park Department of Public Health is sponsoring *Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day*.

Scheduled for Tues., Sept. 20, *Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day* encourages individuals to visit a health care professional such as a doctor, nurse, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, dentist or other health provider, make an appointment for a visit, attend a health event in the community or help a friend, neighbor or family member do the same.

Take a Loved One for a Checkup Day is vital, public health officials say, because too many racial and ethnic minorities are dying prematurely and suffering from preventable diseases such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS, infant mortality and vaccine preventable diseases. Taking responsibility for one's own health and encouraging others to monitor their health are key components of a healthy community, and visiting a health care professional is the first step.

"I can't overstate how important it is for Oak Park residents to get regular check-ups or utilize one of the services the Health Department offers," said Director of Public Health Georgeen Polyak, PhD. "This day will help us focus our attention on the fact that many diseases can be prevented with proper care and regular doctor visits."

Checkup day is intended for both those with and without insurance. The Oak Park Department of Public Health and the PCC Wellness Center can help the uninsured find health care. Among the programs are *Access to Care*, which offers low-cost primary health care, supplementary pharmacy and laboratory and radiology services to qualified individuals and families, and *Know Your Numbers*, a monthly program that offers screenings of blood pressure, total cholesterol, high density lipoproteins, glucose, weight and body mass index.

For more information on health services, contact the PCC Community Wellness Center at 383.0113 or the Oak Park Department of Public Health at 358.5483 or health@oak-park.us.

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