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Contact: Candice Watkins Robinson, MA
Health Communication Specialist
919-245-2462 or cwatkins@co.orange.nc.us
Date: November 1, 2010

HEALTH DEPARTMENT TO CELEBRATE AMERICAN DIABETES MONTH

HILLSBOROUGH – November is American Diabetes Month, a time to talk about the seriousness of diabetes. The Orange County Health Department will take time this month to raise awareness about type 2 diabetes prevention and management among Orange County residents.

Diabetes is a chronic disease marked by high blood glucose levels that result from defects in the body's ability to produce and/or use insulin. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes affecting Americans. If left uncontrolled, diabetes can lead to other health problems including eye disease, limb amputation, heart disease and kidney disease. "The good news is that people can take steps to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. If a person has diabetes, he or she can learn how to better manage it to help prevent or slow the development of complications," said Renée Kemske, Registered Dietitian for the Orange County Health Department."

According to the North Carolina Diabetes Prevention and Control Branch, 9,453 Orange County adults have been diagnosed with diabetes. Many residents are unknowingly living with the disease. The Orange County Health Department will hold several events this month focused on American Diabetes Month and type 2 diabetes. On Nov. 3, 2010, the health department will host the Orange County Diabetes Task Force meeting. The Diabetes Task Force is comprised of local health care providers and community agency representatives who are dedicated to addressing the needs of residents living with diabetes. The health department, in partnership with the Orange County Department on Aging, will also offer two diabetes education classes entitled "Diabetes: Why We Should Be Living like We Have It." The first class will take place on Nov. 3, 2010 at 11 a.m. at the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center in Chapel Hill and the second class will take place on Nov. 17, 2010 at 11 a.m. at the Central Orange Senior Center in Hillsborough. Both sessions are free and open to the public.

While November is recognized as diabetes awareness month, the Orange County Health Department's efforts to promote diabetes prevention and management are continuous. The public can access diabetes prevention information online by visiting www.orangecountync.gov/health/diabetes.asp. In addition, the health department's ongoing Diabetes Self-Management Education program helps residents with type 2 diabetes better manage their disease and prevent complications. "We have been very pleased with some of the changes we've seen participants make in our program, including lowering A1C levels, improving dietary and physical activity behaviors, and conducting self-foot exams," Kemske explained.

The mission of the Orange County Health Department is to enhance the quality of life, promote the health, and preserve the environment for all people in Orange County. For more information about the health department's diabetes awareness efforts, contact Candice Watkins Robinson at 919-245-2462 or cwatkins@co.orange.nc.us.

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