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HARC Study Shows Over Half of Eastern Riverside County Overweight or Obese
Newly Released Community Health Monitor Also Includes Statistical Profiles on the Uninsured, Alcohol Abuse, Cancer Screening and More

(PALM DESERT, CA) – Healthcare professionals in eastern Riverside County concerned about the expanding waistlines of the population, received weighty evidence of the problem this week with the 2008 release of the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) *Community Health Monitor*.

An estimated 270,000 adults (56.2%) surveyed over the past are overweight or obese, based on their body mass index. The numbers are equally large for children between the ages of 2-17, with 47,441 kids suffering from the problem that has been linked to the onset of a number of illnesses, including diabetes and heart disease.

Among the *Community Health Monitor's* other findings:

- Over 80,000 adults (14.8%) report that they do not have any kind of healthcare coverage, while a sampling of parents/guardians surveyed show that over 23,000 children in Eastern Riverside County remain uninsured.
- Hispanic/Latino males are far more likely than Caucasian males – by more than a 4:1 margin – to not have taken a PSA test to detect prostate cancer.
- Among seniors aged 55+ who need assistance, an estimated 62,800 of them (23.8%), have no one available.

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- Over 7,800 people who admitted to having too much to drink within the prior thirty-day period, got into a car and drove.

HARC, a regional independent healthcare consortium made up of more than 35 healthcare agencies and organizations, hired independent research firm Macro International to conduct the survey, which canvassed more than 55,000 households through phone calls. Respondents fielded questions related to health status, behavioral risks, quality of life issues, access, and utilization of services. A total of 172 questions comprised the adult survey and 136 for children.

Because of the large sample size, researchers were able to deliver statistically valid results in virtually every major survey category. This is in stark contrast to prior needs assessment initiatives with low sample sizes and an emphasis on qualitative, rather than quantitative data.

The research initiative, which will be repeated every three years, aims to deliver healthcare providers, cities, government agencies, and private interests a snapshot of public health in eastern Riverside County. HARC data will be used to facilitate decision-making on future issues such as program development, access, funding, utilization, and more.

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“The Community Health Monitor provides us with our first truly independent, unbiased baseline of data from which to measure our collective progress in local healthcare,” said HARC Board President Glen Grayman, M.D. *“Our efforts now shift to working with stakeholders across the healthcare spectrum to show them how to utilize the information as part of their strategic planning process.”*

Civic leaders and healthcare professionals got their first glimpse of the HARC *Community Health Monitor* at a special presentation at the Palm Desert campus of California State University San Bernardino. Individuals or groups wishing to learn more about the study are encouraged to call HARC offices at (760)601-3663.

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About HARC

Formed in 2006 by a consortium of more than 35 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.