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HARC Data Shows Region's Population Plagued by High Blood Pressure Readings

(PALM DESERT, CA) – Almost one third of Eastern Riverside County adults have been told by a health practitioner they have high blood pressure, sometimes referred to as “hypertension.” The findings, published in the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) 2007 *Community Health Monitor*, coincide with May being National High Blood Pressure Education Month.

An estimated 32.3% of those interviewed, representing 176,531 adults, state they have been diagnosed with high blood pressure. Related findings included:

- Whites are over two and a half times more likely than Hispanic/Latino respondents to report having received a diagnosis of high blood pressure.
- Diagnosis of high blood pressure is more likely in the lowest and highest income categories.
- The likelihood of being diagnosed with high blood pressure increases with age. At least one quarter of respondents in each of the five educational categories report being diagnosed with high blood pressure; a diagnosis is more likely for respondents with the most education.
- The American Heart Association reports that, similar to the findings in Eastern Riverside County, nearly one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure, but because there are not symptoms, nearly one third of these people do not know it. This amounts to about 73 million people age 20 and older in the United States who currently have hypertension.
- High Blood Pressure was listed on death certificates as the primary cause of death of 54,707 Americans in 2004. Further, high blood pressure was listed as a primary or contributing cause of death in about 300,000 of the more than 2.4 million total U.S. deaths in 2004.

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HARC's *Community Health Monitor* contains data from more than 3,500 completed household surveys conducted throughout Eastern Riverside County. 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 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.

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. More information can be obtained by calling HARC at (760) 601-3663, or visiting the organization's website at www.harcddata.org.

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