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HARC Finds High Cholesterol Problems Across Numerous Population Groups within the Region

(PALM DESERT, CA) - More than 27% of Eastern Riverside County adults have been told by a doctor, nurse, or health care professional they have high blood cholesterol. The findings, published in the most recent Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC) *Community Health Monitor*, coincide with September being National Cholesterol Education Month.

An estimated 27.7% of those interviewed, representing 150,625 adults, state they have been diagnosed with high blood cholesterol. Related findings included:

- Twice as many whites, compared to Hispanic/Latino respondents, have been diagnosed with the problem.
- Between 23 and 31% of respondents in each income group (\$0-24,999; \$25,000-49,999; \$50,000-74,999; 75,000+) reported readings outside of safe ranges.
- Age is a factor affecting the likelihood of developing high blood cholesterol, with proportions ranging from a low of 1.2% of respondents between the ages of 18-24, to a high of 49.8% for respondents 65-74.
- The medical condition is equally prevalent among men and women.

Medical research strongly suggests that high blood cholesterol remains a major risk factor for heart disease. The National Heart Lung & Blood Institute recommends total cholesterol measurement to be less than 200mg/dL of blood [milligrams (mg) of cholesterol per deciliter (dL)], and the optimal Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol level to be less than 100mg/dL.



HARC's *Community Health Monitor*, conducted in 2007, 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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