



For immediate release

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Volunteers Celebrated During National Volunteer Week by Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department Community Preparedness Committees

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) wants to recognize the numerous volunteers involved with the Community Preparedness Committees in each county of our district during National Volunteer Week, April 23 -29.

“We use volunteers in implementing our preparedness plans for our region,” explains Heidi Wheeler, Emergency Response Coordinator for Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department. “Volunteers are vital to a successful response during and after a disaster or public health emergency. We appreciate our emergency preparedness volunteers and their commitment to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the people in their county.” These individuals may be asked to set-up and run a shelter or mass dispensing operation to provide life-saving drugs during a disease outbreak.

National Volunteer Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. It’s about demonstrating to the nation that by working together, we have the resilience to meet any challenge.

“Clergy is one group of hidden treasures that will be critical to the health and wellbeing of others by providing comfort and counsel after an emergency,” shares Wheeler. “We will continue to work with ministerial associations and individual clergy who are willing to assist us in an emergency response.”

“SWNPHD encourages everyone to seek out ways to serve and volunteer whenever possible,” states Wheeler. “We appreciate our local heroes.” Volunteers are needed to join Community Preparedness Committees (CPC) in Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

CPC volunteers meet once a year for annual planning and review their roles in a disaster. They can also attend disaster training exercises. You do not need a background in law enforcement, medical or fire to be a volunteer. There are numerous positions that can be fulfilled by those that “just want to help.” For more information on becoming a volunteer contact Heidi Wheeler, Emergency Response Coordinator at 308-882-4269/308-345-4223 or email at erc@swhealth.ne.gov.

SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and 501 Broadway (5th Street entrance of Moreland building) in Imperial. You can follow us on [Facebook.com/swnphd](https://www.facebook.com/swnphd) and [Twitter@swpublichealth](https://twitter.com/swpublichealth). The health department serves Chase, Dundy, Hayes, Hitchcock, Frontier, Furnas, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties.

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