

# NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release.

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## **Early Testing for Colorectal Cancer Saves Lives – PPHD Offers Free Test Kits**

Who wants to think about colorectal cancer screening? It's not exactly a fun topic of conversation, but it is a very important part of the body. The most effective way to prevent death from this preventable, treatable, and beatable cancer is early detection – so get screened today. No more putting it off. Your family needs you to be around.

March is Colon Cancer Awareness month and we ask you take this message to heart and get tested today. Panhandle residents age 50 or older can contact PPHD at 1-855-227-2217 for a free FOBT kit. An FOBT test kit is a no-cost way to check for blood in the stool. It is one of the ways to screen for colorectal cancer.

Screening tests find colon cancer early, when treatment works best, and the chance for a full recovery is 90%. It is important to be proactive about screening for colorectal cancer, as over 900 Nebraska residents are diagnosed each year. Colorectal cancers are the second leading cause of all deaths from cancer in the United States.

“Because people often don't have any symptoms in the early stages of colon cancer, having regular screening tests beginning at age 50 is the most effective way to reduce your risk of colon cancer,” said Cheri Farris, Community Health Educator for PPHD.

“You may need to be tested earlier or more often than other people if you or a close relative have had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer, or if you have inflammatory bowel disease,” Farris added. “Talk to your medical provider if you are under 50 and at risk.”

An FOBT kit is a simple screening test that detects hidden blood in the stool. It can be completed in the privacy of your own home and mailed to a laboratory. The results are sent to you and your doctor. If blood is found in the stool a follow-up colonoscopy will be recommended. PPHD can assist with planning follow-up care as needed.

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month and the Nebraska Colon Cancer Screening Program and Panhandle Public Health District are working together to improve colon cancer screening rates in Nebraska by offering free fecal occult blood test (FOBT) kits to Panhandle residents through June.

For more information visit [www.pphd.org](http://www.pphd.org). Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.