



February is Heart Health month.

Employees of Perkins County Health Services wear red every Friday in February to show support and raise awareness of heart health issues. Employees may wear stickers that show some one in their life with heart disease that they are recognizing.

Each Friday employees wearing red may enter their name in a drawing for fun, heart healthy items.

Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in the U.S. About 600,000 people die of heart disease in America each year. Every year about 715,000 Americans have a heart attack. The major warning signs of a heart attack are chest pain or discomfort; upper body pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw or upper stomach area; shortness of breath; nausea, lightheadedness, or cold sweats.

High blood pressure, high LDL cholesterol and smoking are key risk factors for heart disease. About half of Americans have at least one of these risk factors.

Other medical conditions that can put people at higher risk for heart disease are diabetes; obesity and being overweight; poor diet; physical inactivity; and excessive alcohol use. PCHS is promoting the GO RED campaign which stands for:

Get your numbers! Ask your healthcare provider to check your blood pressure and cholesterol;

Own your lifestyle. Stop smoking, lose weight, exercise and eat healthy;

Realize your risk! We think it won't happen but it's the number one killer!

Educate your family. Make healthy food choices and stay active.

Don't be silent. Raise your voice and let others know about this killer!

The I-80 Challenge started on Jan. 6 and runs through April 21. There are 13 teams with five PCHS employees on each team. Each team member wears a pedometer and records how many miles are walked a week. Members may add one mile per day for each 64 ounces of water drank each day.

Each Monday members contact their team leader and turn in their miles.

An arrow representing each team is moved across the U.S. from San Francisco to Teaneck, N.J. following Interstate 80.

The team that arrives in N.J. first wins. Each member paid an entry fee that will be used toward the prizes.

Studies show that even taking a brisk 10-minute walk, three times a day, five days a week

may protect your heart by lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol. Contact your healthcare provider for more heart health suggestions and to know your numbers.