

News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 26, 2008

Connecticut Department of Public Health
Contact: William Gerrish
(860) 509-7270

Thanksgiving Day is Family Health History Day

Department of Public Health Asks Connecticut Residents to learn about their family's health history to improve their own health

Hartford - The Department of Public Health encourages Connecticut families to take a few minutes on Thursday, November 27th – Thanksgiving Day – to discuss their family health history. Thanksgiving Day was designated by the U.S. Surgeon General in 2004 as national Family History Day, dedicated to families increasing their knowledge of their own health history.

“Knowing your family health history is an important way to understand your risk factors and the preventive steps you can take to keep you and your family healthy,” stated DPH Commissioner J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A.

The goal of the Family Health Initiative is to provide an accessible method for easily obtaining an accurate family health history and, importantly, to use that information in health promotion and disease prevention. Such information is important because, although it is estimated that in a few years sophisticated genetic testing and other related advances will dramatically change how health care is practiced, genetic information can already be used today to improve health.

While most diseases are due to the interactions of multiple genes and environmental factors, almost everyone has available now – at no cost – a personalized set of information that captures these factors and can serve as the foundation for individualized disease prevention: the family history. Yet many individuals are unaware of their relatives' medical histories.

The Family History Initiative encourages family discussion of health history, and provides a free, easy-to-use web-based family history tool that people can download and complete. The tool, titled “My Family Health Portrait,” can be found via a link on the DPH website, at: www.ct.gov/dph and click on “Family History” under Featured links. It is also now available online in Spanish, and in print by request.

Together with the U.S. Surgeon General, the Connecticut Department of Public Health urges all Connecticut families to increase their awareness of the importance of family health history and to join together this Thanksgiving for health.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

-###-