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New website updates health of community

CUMBERLAND — Area residents can learn more about plans for improving the health of Allegany County at a new website launched by the Allegany County Health Planning Coalition, a group of community partners working together for a healthier community.

“Over the next several months this coalition will seek input from community organizations on the implementation of public health strategies to address the most critical health concerns in our area and enrich the lives of all Allegany Countians,” states Dr. Sue Raver, Allegany County health officer.

The local health action plan addresses the top 13 priorities identified by a recent health assessment done cooperatively by the Allegany County Health Department and Western Maryland Health System. Rising to the top of the list of priorities were tobacco use, obesity, access to care and emotional and mental health.

The statistical information compiled about the health status of the county and a summary of community health needs are available on the website. Actions to address each of the top 13 priorities are on the site as well.

“These action plans are designed to engage everyone in the community, including businesses, churches, civic organizations, and individuals,” explains Nancy Forlifer, director of Community Health and Wellness at WMHS. “The strategies range from education about making healthier choices on a personal level to implementation of public policy changes that promote better health.”

The coalition meets monthly and the meetings are open to the public. The meeting schedule and the minutes from the meetings are available on the website, www.alleganyhealthplanningcoalition.com. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 1:30 p.m. at the Allegany County Health Department, Willowbrook Road. The next meeting is Tuesday at 1:30 p.m.

Members of the Allegany County Health Planning Coalition include the Allegany County Health Department, WMHS, Allegany County Board of Education, County United Way, Tri-state Community Health Center, and the Western Maryland Area Health Education Center.

For more information, call the Allegany County Health Department, 301-759-5000 or the Western Maryland Health System, 240-964-8424.

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