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HEPATITIS AWARENESS MONTH

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SANFORD, Fla. – The Florida Department of Health in Seminole County (DOH-Seminole) recognizes May as National Hepatitis Awareness Month and invites the community to the *Cinco de Mayo Hepatitis Health Fair* on Friday, May 5th from 10:00am to 2:00pm at the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County Auditorium located at 400 West Airport Boulevard in Sanford.

Free hepatitis information and resources, hepatitis C screening, hepatitis A and B vaccination for at-risk-adults, and blood tests for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), cholesterol and A1c levels will be offered during the health fair. Attendees will have the opportunity to donate blood at the *Blood Drive* by *oneblood* and learn about community resources and important health topics.

“Chronic hepatitis can cause serious liver problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis and even liver cancer. Many people are unaware they are infected with hepatitis so it is important to reduce serious liver diseases by getting tested and treated for hepatitis early,” said Donna Walsh, health officer for the Florida Department of Health in Seminole County.

The National Hepatitis Awareness Month annual observance is an opportunity to collaborate and shed light on this hidden epidemic by raising awareness about viral hepatitis and encouraging priority populations to get tested. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends baby boomers or anyone born from 1945-1965 get tested for hepatitis C. Baby boomers are 5 times more likely to have hepatitis C. The reason that baby boomers have high rates of hepatitis C is not completely understood. Most boomers are believed to have become infected in the 1970s and 1980s when rates of hepatitis C were the highest.

Hepatitis is characterized by inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis A, B, and C are the most common types of viral hepatitis in the United States. Symptoms of hepatitis, if they are present, include nausea, fever, weakness, loss of appetite and jaundice. Hepatitis A is transmitted by eating food or drinking water that has been contaminated with human waste (feces). Hepatitis B is spread through contact with the blood or body fluids of an infected person. Hepatitis C is usually spread through contact with blood containing the virus. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C (HCV).

For information or assistance on this program, please contact Enid Santiago-Cruz at (407) 665-3019.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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