



WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke Recognizes Georgetown for Preventing and Controlling Heart Disease and Stroke

February 16, 2012 (Williamson County) –

The Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke has recognized Georgetown for preventing and controlling heart disease and stroke and for promoting heart health. Georgetown earned a SILVER recognition level for the 2011 Heart and Stroke Healthy City Assessment! The Council's Texas Heart and Stroke Healthy City Recognition Program honors cities that advance recognized best practices for preventing and controlling heart disease and stroke.

The Texas Department of State Health Services and the Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke coordinate a state-wide recognition program called the "Heart and Stroke Healthy City Program." According to Tom Tenner, PhD, Chair of the Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke, "this program helps bring into focus those cities that raise the bar in cardiovascular health." The Heart and Stroke Healthy City Program is based on proven interventions that have made a significant difference in increasing physical activity and better eating habits, as well as reducing tobacco use, and decreasing response time to heart attacks and strokes.

To conduct the Heart and Stroke Healthy City Assessment, the WilCo Wellness Alliance formed a subcommittee of its members. These included the City of Georgetown, St. David's Georgetown Hospital, Seton Medical Center Williamson, Scott and White Healthcare Round Rock, Lone Star Circle of Care, Williamson County EMS, Georgetown Independent School District, Southwestern University, Texas AgriLife Extension, LifeSteps, American Red Cross, American Heart Association, Williamson County and Cities Health District, and local residents.

Ten indicators are used to determine recognition as a Heart and Stroke Healthy City. Environmental indicators include offering physical activity areas, healthy eating options, defibrillators and CPR classes in the community. Policy indicators include smoke-free ordinances in worksites, restaurants, and day care centers; an EMS system with priority response times to 911 calls for heart attacks or strokes and recognized guidelines for the care and treatment of heart attack and stroke in hospitals.

The WilCo Wellness Alliance was formed in 2009 and one goal members have been working toward since that time has been to achieve recognition level status for Georgetown. Kimberly Garrett, Director of Parks and Recreation at the City of Georgetown also serves as the Community Coach for the WilCo Wellness Alliance. When asked about Georgetown receiving the Heart & Stroke Healthy City honor, Garrett said, "providing areas for physical activity such as parks, playgrounds, trails and recreation centers have a great benefit to the community and it shows by attaining Silver Recognition. I am extremely proud to be a part of something that has

such positive effects on the community's health and wellness." The Alliance is piloting several initiatives in Georgetown including: healthy menu recognition program with restaurants, prescription for exercise project with healthcare professionals and referrals for fitness classes at the Georgetown Recreation Center, worksite wellness toolkit tailored based on employer size, and community gardening through faith-based organizations. WilCo Wellness Alliance members have also worked within their own organizations to advance practices for preventing and controlling heart disease and stroke.

The mission of the Texas Council on Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke is to educate, inform and facilitate action among Texans to reduce the human and financial toll of cardiovascular disease and stroke.

The City of Georgetown will receive the official plaque Tuesday, February 28th at the City Council Meeting, and will vow to continue striving for a healthier place to work, play and live!

Heart disease is the leading cause of death and stroke is the third in both Texas and the United States. Though heart disease is also the leading cause of death in Georgetown, the rate of death is significantly lower than the state rate (131 in Georgetown compared to 194 in Texas). The risk factors for heart disease and stroke include physical inactivity, poor eating habits, obesity, tobacco use, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes. In Williamson County and Texas, the prevalence of these risk factors has not significantly decreased in recent years, except for tobacco use.

For more information about Georgetown's Silver Level recognition or the WilCo Wellness Alliance, contact Melissa Cammack at 512-943-3667 or mcammack@wcchd.org. More information about the state-wide Heart and Stroke Healthy City Recognition Program can be found on the Texas Department of State Health Services website at www.texascvdcouncil.org, or by contacting Maria Benedict with the Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke Program at 512-776-3507 or maria.benedict@dshs.state.tx.us.

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