

Press Releases

02-02-11 This Week In Orange County By Edward A. Diana

The only good thing about being in the midst of yet another snowstorm, the eighth of the season, was that the groundhog did not see his shadow on Groundhog Day. With all the snow we've had this winter we're lucky he even made it out of his den! The good news is that no shadow is supposed to predict the early arrival of warmer weather. Who among us wouldn't welcome that?

Speaking of warming things up, how about a little heart-warming? Not only do we celebrate Valentine's Day this month, February is American Heart Month. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the U.S. and a major cause of disability. The most common heart disease is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack.

When it comes to heart disease, prevention is key. Dr. Jean M. Hudson, Orange County Health Commissioner reminds us. A healthy diet, regular physical activity, and a tobacco-free lifestyle are three positive steps that one can take to achieve a healthy, long life. It's also important to know and recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and to act quickly if you are experiencing any of them. They may include: chest discomfort or discomfort in other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, as well as other signs such as cold sweats, nausea, or lightheadedness. Heart health screenings also play an important role in prevention. For information about low-cost screenings available in Orange County, residents may call Healthy Orange at 568-5247.

While February may be a month full of reds and pinks, hearts and flowers, the long days of winter can also leave some people feeling blue. If you are feeling depressed, hopeless, sad, or lonely, or know someone who is, please know there are a number of excellent, free resources available in Orange County to provide help and assistance. There's no need to go it alone.

Chris Ashman, Orange County Commissioner of Mental Health, has asked me to share these resources with you.

- **HELPLINE – 1-800-832-1200** – 24/7 hotline, offered by the Mental Health Association in Orange County, provides crisis intervention, information, emotional support, and referrals.

- **Dial 2-1-1** – A multi-lingual, health and human services information and referral service.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-TALK (8255)** – A 24-hour hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

Because action can make a difference, or even save a life, Commissioner Ashman recommends that these numbers be entered into one's cell phone, posted on the refrigerator at home, or hung in a school locker.

Remember, warmer, brighter days are just around the corner, the groundhog says so. Let's hope he's right.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana
County Executive