

## TESTIMONY FOR PUBLIC HEARING / CHRONIC DISEASE AND PREVENTION CONTROL

My name is Patricia Moehring, Community Health Education Director for Southern Seven Health Department. I've been with the agency for nearly 27 years.

Southern Seven Health Department is a multi county health department, located in the seven southernmost counties of Illinois: Alexander, Hardin, Johnson, Massac, Pope, Pulaski, and Union. Population is approximately 70,000. S7 is the largest health department geographically in the state of Illinois covering 2003 square miles and is comparable in size to the state of Delaware.

Southern Seven faces significant health disparities compared to other regions in Illinois due to its rural locale and socioeconomic conditions.

Heart Disease mortality, morbidity in the seven county area are among the highest in Illinois. Heart Disease is the leading cause of death for the seven counties, accounting for nearly 30% of total deaths each year. Hardin and Massac counties have the highest and fourth highest age-adjusted mortality rates in Illinois for heart disease at 890.0 and 831.1 per 100,000, compared with 661.2 per 100,000 overall in Illinois. In 5 of the seven counties, over 33% of adults have been told they have high blood pressure, compared with 26% of adults in Illinois overall. In addition, all seven counties smoking rate is over 25% with three counties over 30% while the state of Illinois is at 18.8% (BRFS).

Alexander County has the highest rate of diabetes in Illinois with a rate of 14.3%, and Pope and Pulaski counties have the fourth and sixth highest diabetes rates at 11.4% and 11.1%, respectively, compared with 6% in Illinois overall. Obesity in Illinois is approximately 25% while the 7 counties are greater than 30%. Johnson and Union counties are ranked first and third for highest obesity rates among adults in Illinois, with 70% of adults classified as overweight or obese to 59.9% of adults in Illinois overall. (Burden of Heart Disease and Stroke of Illinois, IPLAN)

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the southern 7 counties, accounting for 23% of all deaths annually. Three of the 7 counties are in the top 10 counties in Illinois for All-Cancer Death rates. (NCI/CDC)

S7 is partnering with the "Healthy Southern Illinois Delta Network" addressing cardiovascular disease in the lower 17 counties of Illinois. We partner with SIU Center for Rural Health and Social Services, Southern Illinois Health Care, and Egyptian County HD in implementing CATCH (HRSA / Delta funding). We partnered with UIC Center for Research on Women and Gender (National Center of Excellence in Women's Health) through ASIST2010. We recently were funded to partner with them again on a planning grant called "Coalition for Healthy Communities" (funded by the DHHS - OWH) to assist our area to further understand and address the factors that contribute to the risk for and prevalence of CVD, obesity, diabetes, and cancer among adult women.

In closing, S7HD wants to make a difference in the health of our area. We have identified our region's health problems through the IPLAN process. We have an advisory group in place, but with shrinking dollars and fewer people we are facing an uphill battle. What we would propose is a consistent resource or funding stream to help us fight chronic disease and ultimately it's toll on our area. We also support action in Illinois and policy change within the state to help slow down and reverse this trend and assist us in becoming a healthier and fit region.