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| **Press Release**  **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Tim Jones | tim.jones@heartoftexashealthcare.org  325-597-2901 |

**Cholesterol Monitoring Helps Prevent Heart Disease**

*A simple blood test can reveal important information about your health.*

BRADY, Texas (Sept. 21, 2020) – Although prostate cancer affects an estimated 3 million Americans each year, early detection can lead to better treatment outcomes. During National Prostate Cancer Month, Heart of Texas Healthcare System is urging men not to delay preventive healthcare services, including important cancer screenings.

“Discussing your risk and screening options with your healthcare provider can help ensure early detection,” said Dr. Stephen Douglas Bell, Family Medicine physician at Brady Medical Clinic, a service of Heart of Texas Healthcare System. “Your healthcare provider can help ensure that you get the screenings you need when you need them.”

Many men do not notice symptoms until the disease has progressed. Discussing your risk with your healthcare provider during a yearly wellness exam is a good way to ensure that the disease is caught in its early stages.

Prostate cancer is a malignant tumor composed of cells from the prostate gland. Slow-growing in nature, the tumor often produces few or no symptoms until it has grown to an advanced stage. Many times, it is not detected until it has expanded to surrounding tissues.

Although the exact cause of prostate cancer is not known, there are several identified risk factors, including advanced age, genetics, and hormonal influences.

The risk of developing prostate cancer generally increases with age. It is most commonly found in men over age 65, although many cases have been diagnosed in men during screenings at the age of 50. Men over 50 are encouraged to undergo regular screenings so that the disease can be caught in its early stages. Those who have a family history of the disease should begin screenings at the age of 45 or earlier, depending on a physician’s recommendation.

The cancer is also more common in African-American men than those of any other race. Statistics also show that Asian-American and Hispanic men are less likely to develop prostate cancer than Caucasian men. Regardless, men with a family history of the disease or who are over age 50 are encouraged to talk to their primary care providers about scheduling regular screenings.

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Although many treatment options are available, Dr. Bell says a healthcare provider can advise men on the best option when taking age, general health, and cancer grade into consideration.

Testing the level of a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) in the blood is a common way to screen for prostate cancer. Another method is through a digital rectal exam, during which the doctor can feel for any bumps or hard places on the prostate. These tests are often recommended during a yearly wellness exam with a primary care provider at Brady Medical Clinic.

According to Dr. Bell, fear of COVID-19 has caused many people to delay or skip important routine healthcare services.

“Delaying the medical care you need to protect your health is never a good idea,” Dr. Bell said. “Don’t take your health for granted. Meeting regularly with your healthcare provider is key to protecting your health.”

To learn more about healthcare services or to schedule an appointment at Brady Medical Clinic, call 325-597-2114.

**About Heart of Texas Healthcare System**Heart of Texas Healthcare System provides healthcare for residents of McCulloch County and the surrounding area. Founded in 2011, the system offers a wealth of medical services, including 24-hour emergency care, advanced radiology services, a clinical laboratory, dialysis services, physical therapy, surgical services, patient education, sleep studies, and more. The system also owns and operates Brady Medical Clinic, which provides family medicine, preventive care, and acute care for minor emergencies. For additional information, please visit www.heartoftexashealthcare.org.

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