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| **Press Release****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Tim Jones | tim.jones@heartoftexashealthcare.org325-597-2901 |

**Make Your Health a Priority in 2021**

*Heart of Texas Healthcare System urges everyone to stay safe from COVID-19 and focus on health.*

BRADY, Texas (Jan. 11, 2021) – The new year is a time to look to the future ahead. This year offers a chance for new beginnings and new reasons for hope. With a COVID-19 vaccine promising to offer relief from the pandemic, we have much to look forward to in 2021. As we enter this new year, Heart of Texas Healthcare System urges everyone to take steps to protect each other in the coming months and to keep health and wellness in mind.

“With a vaccine rolling out, it is more important than ever that we do the things necessary to ensure that we all are able to take advantage of it and stay healthy,” said Wade Huey, MD, Family Medicine Physician at Brady Medical Clinic, a service of Heart of Texas Healthcare System. “Focusing on your health and protecting the most vulnerable in our community from this virus should be our most important resolutions.”

The new COVID-19 vaccines that have recently been approved are only available in limited quantities as production gets underway. The first to receive the vaccine are front-line healthcare workers who are caring for patients affected by the highly dangerous and contagious disease. The elderly and those with certain high-risk health conditions will be the next groups to receive the vaccine. The vaccine is expected to become more widely available later in the year.

In our region and across Texas, rates of COVID-19 infections have reached alarming levels in recent weeks. Hospitals have seen a flood of patients suffering serious illness. According to Dr. Huey, taking everyday steps to slow the spread of the virus will be important in the next few months. Wearing a mask in public, washing your hands frequently and practicing social distancing can all help prevent the spread of the disease.

Dr. Huey said that taking steps to protect your health is often on people’s lists of new year’s resolutions, but that this year it is more important than ever, especially since those with certain underlying health conditions are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

**Schedule your wellness exam to ensure you are in good health**

Annual wellness exams help ensure that you are in good health and caught up on important health screenings. These yearly checkups, covered by Medicare and most insurance plans, allow your provider to monitor your health and talk about health issues important to you and your health goals.

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Your provider may request several lab screenings to check for things such as your blood glucose and cholesterol levels. Depending on your age, gender and risk levels, cancer screenings might also be ordered as a preventative measure.

**Start a new fitness routine**

Committing to an exercise plan is another common resolution. People of all ages and physical conditions can benefit from regular physical activity. But you don’t have to wear yourself out. Even a little physical activity can help you improve your overall wellness.

Children, teenagers, seniors, even people with disabilities will find they feel, think, and look better with just a little physical activity. Starting slowly and finding physical activities that you enjoy will help you maintain the habit throughout the year. Even brisk walks are a great way to add needed exercise to your daily routine.

**Focus on your mental health**

Many people are feeling stressed or depressed during the pandemic. Taking breaks from the news and focusing on family can help you stay centered and find relief from stressors. Exercise and getting enough sleep are also key to controlling stress.

“We have much to look forward to this year,” Dr. Huey said. “If we look out for each other and take care of ourselves, we can ensure a better, more joyous year ahead.”

To learn more about local healthcare services or to schedule an appointment, please call Heart of Texas Healthcare System at 325-597-2901 or visit www.heartoftexashealthcare.org.

**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, 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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