

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release: January 07, 2024**

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# **SEARHC Launches 'Heart Matters' Program: Cultivating Healthy Heart Habits in February, National Heart Health Month 2024**

JUNEAU, Alaska – February is National Heart Health Month, a dedicated time to take daily steps to reduce the risk of heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. To empower Southeast Alaskans and provide them with resources and incentives to prioritize their health, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) is launching a 29-day program, Heart Matters, starting February 1.

SEARHC Health Educators, Physicians, Registered Dietitians and Behavioral Health Clinicians will share health tips and tricks during this month-long program to help community members reach their goals. This initiative aims to help individuals transform short-term goals into long-term habits.

When joining Heart Matters, participants can select personal health goals, such as enhancing physical fitness, improving nutrition, managing stress, or any practices that benefit heart health and overall well-being. The SEARHC team will offer support tools, a weekly virtual education series, as well as incentives to aid participants in establishing new healthy habits in 2024. Weekly prizes await participants at the program's conclusion. Continued engagement in the program boosts chances to win.

Fostering a daily commitment to heart health can significantly impact well-being. Small acts of self-care, like opting for stairs over elevators, ensuring quality sleep, and preparing nutritious meals, contribute positively to heart health. Studies affirm that self-care practices help maintain healthy blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. Daily activities that promote heart health include:

- Engaging in a daily dose of physical activity, such as a brisk, 30-minute walk.
- Quitting smoking.
- Preparing meals low in sodium and unhealthy fats.
- Adhering to prescribed medications and attending medical appointments.
- Ensuring 7-8 hours of quality sleep each night.
- Managing stress through activities like meditation, yoga or relaxation with a book or movie.

Alongside the Heart Matters program, SEARHC will be leading a virtual education series every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. - 12:45 p.m. featuring professionals and healthcare providers discussing topics such as goal setting, nutrition, diabetes prevention, heart health and stress management.

To sign up for Heart Matters and take the first step toward improving your heart health, visit [www.searhc.org/heartmatters](http://www.searhc.org/heartmatters). Early Bird Registration is from January 11 until January 19 with additional prize entries for early sign-ups. For more information, contact SEARHC Health Educator Kate Grumbles at [kgrumbles@searhc.org](mailto:kgrumbles@searhc.org) or 907.966.8785.

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### **About SEARHC**

Established in 1975, SEARHC is one of the largest Native-run healthcare organizations in the United States. As an independent and nonprofit health Consortium, SEARHC provides health-related services in 27 communities throughout Southeast Alaska. Visit [searhc.org](http://searhc.org) for more information.

### **PSA:**

Join SEARHC for 'Heart Matters,' a 29-day program starting February 1 during National Heart Health Month. This initiative empowers you to build lasting heart-healthy habits with weekly prizes and expert support from SEARHC Health Educators, Registered Dietitians, and more. Sign up now at [www.searhc.org/heartmatters](http://www.searhc.org/heartmatters) for early bird perks and join our Thursday Virtual Education Series featuring healthcare professionals discussing nutrition, stress management, and more!