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## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **November is Diabetes Awareness Month**

“November is Diabetes Awareness Month, a time to note that diabetes is a major epidemic, and the sixth leading cause of death in America. It is also the nation’s leading cause of blindness,” according to Diane Cusworth, Director of the Otsego County Department of Health.

“Diabetes Awareness Month is a perfect time to talk to your health care provider about your risk factors and, if needed, to be tested for diabetes. Early detection and proper control of diabetes can delay or even prevent some of the worst consequences of the disorder,” she said.

There are two forms of diabetes: type 1, which used to be called "juvenile diabetes" and type 2, which was called "adult-onset diabetes." By 1997 so many children had developed type 2 diabetes that the terms “juvenile” and “adult-onset” were dropped. Type 2 is the more common form, affecting up to 95 percent of people with diabetes.

Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include being overweight, getting too little physical activity, and having a parent, brother or sister with diabetes. Symptoms of diabetes include frequent urination, abnormal thirst, excessive appetite accompanied by weight loss, fatigue, recurrent vaginal infections in women, and changes in vision.

About 21 million Americans have diabetes, yet one-third of them are not aware that they have the disease. And diabetes is a growing epidemic.

“According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), one child in three in the United States is now projected to develop diabetes in their lifetime. Diabetes is projected to affect one of every two Hispanics,” Diane Cusworth said.

The news isn’t all bad. Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or delayed with some modest lifestyle changes. Choosing healthier foods, including five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables every day, and low-fat or fat-free milk helps control weight and reduce your risk of diabetes. Engaging in at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week can also significantly decrease your risk for developing diabetes.

Tobacco has many bad health effects, particularly for people with diabetes. Smoking can aggravate problems that people with diabetes already face, such as heart and blood vessel disease. No matter how long you've smoked, your health will improve after you quit.

If you have diabetes, keeping it well managed can help you prevent other health problems, including blindness, kidney failure, heart disease, and stroke. The best way to manage your diabetes is to control your blood sugar level by following the nutritional advice of your health care provider, by being active on a regular basis, and by taking any prescribed medications exactly as instructed.

For more information about Diabetes Awareness Month, call the Otsego County Department of Health at 607-547-4230.