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By ROBERT PIERCE

- Daily Leader

People throughout the area can have various elements of their health checked from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday – for a very small price.

Several groups in the community, including the Seward County Health Department, are hosting a health fair on that day at the Activity Center, and SCHED Clinical Director Elizabeth Irby said workers in her office are excited about the event.

“They haven’t had one since, I believe, 2002,” she said. “That was up at the college. We’re trying to make it a big deal because we think it is. It’s to improve the wellness of our community through prevention. Prevention is the best medicine, I always say.”

Saturday will see the Activity Center filled with much in the way of health booths and activities, according to Irby.

“We’re gonna ask people that they all come in through the south entrance,” she said. “At that point, if people are interested in getting a blood draw with Southwest Medical Center lab to test for CBC, lipid profile, complete metabolic panel, TSH, hemoglobin A1C, PSAs for men, CSA 125s for women, they would pay for those as they came in through the door.”

Irby said as participants enter the large hall of the Activity Center, one choice they have is to have their blood drawn.

"We're starting it early in the morning because for these tests, we need these people to fast," she said. "That means 12 hours prior to having the blood drawn, they need to not eat anything."

Irby said there will be a concession stand available with health related food items.

"No junk food," she said jokingly. "We have all different vendors. I think we're up to 41 booths. These range from a lot of non-profits and some for profit. We have Dr. Curtis Miller of Miller Chiropractic, who will be set up."

Other booths include the Cimarron American Red Cross, the American Cancer Society and Birthline.

"The Heartland Lions eye bank will be there with their van they do vision screenings on," Irby said. "Liberal Springs has a booth, Youthville, Mary Kay, Arthritis Support Group."

The health fair is being sponsored by SCHED, Seward County Community College, SWMC and a number of other agencies. Irby said a stage will be set up near the concession stand to allow people to get a healthy snack and information on a health topic.

"We also have the radiology department with Southwest Medical Center that's going to be there," she said. "They will be doing bone density scans on patients. We also have some nurse practitioners that are volunteering their time to teach women and do breast exams."

Dr. John Scott will be providing a urinalysis in one of the Activity Center's side rooms.

"We also have an area that is going to be manned by our Head Start and our day care surveyor here at the county that will be all children's activities," Irby said. "There'll be crafts for the children to do. There'll be a healthy snack they learn how to make."

They'll get to enjoy that. Some kid activities. Some games. That will be one of the side rooms."

Irby said if parents would like to leave their children in that room for a short while to enjoy the rest of the fair, that is an option.

"There may also be some time where they're reading some books to the kids," she said.

Fair participants can also register to win six tenderloin steaks. Two winners will each receive six steaks. Chances for the steaks will be sold for \$1 for one ticket or \$5 for six tickets. All proceeds go to the Fall Into Health Fair event. Winners will be announced at the fair.

Irby said another exciting part of the fair is having all of SCHED's staff on hand.

"This is a time where our staff here at the health department team up with the Seward County Community College student nurses," she said.

"We work closely with them side by side. It's a good time to improve those communications between the students and the nurses that are working out in the public."

Participants will have to pay to have tests performed.

"We had great dreams of making this free to the public, but the costs of these tests we're providing is about \$700 to \$900 worth of value,"

Irby said.

To participate in the testing costs \$35, according to Irby. The cost had originally been set at \$40, but due to circumstances beyond control, seasonal influenza shots will not be available to participants.

"We just invite anyone and everyone," she said.

Irby said pick up sites to bring people to the health fair are also available.

"Good Samaritan is volunteering their bus, and they are having three different pick up sites," she said. "I believe they are at Wal-Mart, Best Market and also Dillon's. They are picking people up. They can park at those parking lots and be transported out to the health fair.

The buses will be taking them back. I'm not sure how often the bus is running. That's still in the works."

Irby said she is hoping for a turnout of about 500 people for Saturday's health fair.

"We have the means if that's what we have, if that's what shows up,"

she said. "I don't know if that many will come out, but we hope that they do."

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