



By Ezra Mann emann@pvdemocrat.com | Mar. 30, 2016

City pledges support for cancer fight

A lot of the fight against any form of cancer involves not just the individual afflicted, but sometimes the support of an entire community.

That was certainly the goal in encouraging Pauls Valley leaders to sign a resolution of local support in a campaign for colorectal cancer screenings.

Speaking on behalf of the American Cancer Society (ACS) High Plains Division office during a recent city county meeting, Community Manager Megan Parris pointed out how important it was to buck a trend of concerning health trends in Garvin County.

"I recognize that there is a passion for health here," said Parris, noting how she noticed this through groups like Allies for Better Living. "It seems to be a very active community that want to be healthy."

Called the 80 X 18 initiative, Parris stated the goal is to have 80 percent of the suggested population in the area screened by 2018. The population most in need are those over the age of 50 or under with family history of colon cancer or polyps.

Parris added that according to the national cancer institute, Garvin County ranks 15th highest out of the 77 counties in Oklahoma for colorectal incidents, making this town a great candidate to get involved.

Getting involved would include helping with the planning and creation of a local educational event from helping promote it and possibly offering a place to host said event before the Relay For Life comes to town.

"It would make you the first city in the state to sign the pledge," said Parris.

"Right now there are about 750 different businesses and organizations across the country signed on so you would be the actual first city to sign on."

The city council unanimously approved the measure and now Parris will move forward by meeting with other key volunteers like those with Pauls Valley General Hospital and the local chamber of commerce.

She noted that something to help those who are uninsured that is already helping toward this goal is that those individual will have the chance to have screenings for free through a program at the hospital in Lindsay.

"It's one of the most preventable cancers," said Parris, pointing out how the pledge would also agree to eventually set a Colorectal Cancer Screening Awareness Day. "I feel like because colorectal cancer is preventable, if one person goes and gets screened and has a polyp removed, that success would save a life."

The city would also be asked to help in the efforts to encourage other businesses and health organizations to sign on to the initiative. The event would be free, possibly include lunch and accept donations for the relay for ACS in general.

"I would welcome the opportunity to be a spokesman, I would tell everyone I know I think this is wonderful," said Councilwoman Shirl Montgomery. "You'll reach so many more people, a lot of people are embarrassed about that type of screening."

Pauls Valley's Relay For Life is set for Friday, June 3 at the PV football stadium. For more information, Parris can be contacted at megan.parris@cancer.org.