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**CELEBRATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH**

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HEALTH PLAN OF SAN JOAQUIN (HPSJ) IS SPREADING THE WORD – SEPTEMBER IS CHOLESTEROL TEACHING MONTH

French Camp, CA) – Health Plan of San Joaquin (HPSJ) is letting members and everyone throughout their San Joaquin and Stanislaus county service area know that September is national Cholesterol Teaching Month. The questions driving this nationwide campaign: Do you know what you should about cholesterol—how to keep it at a healthy level to help stop heart disease?

“These FIVE MUST-KNOW facts about cholesterol can help everyone get started,” says HPSJ Health Education Specialist Jessica Nila.

1. Your body needs cholesterol. This waxy substance is found in the body and aids in many vital roles. Breaking foods down in your stomach, hormones, and making vitamin D are just a few.

Cholesterol can cause problems when your body has too much of it. It can clog arteries and lead to heart disease and stroke.

2. There are good and bad types of cholesterol. Low-density lipoproteins, or LDL, are the bad cholesterol. The higher the level of LDL in your blood, the higher your risk of heart disease.

HDL, or high-density lipoproteins, is known as the good cholesterol. HDL is useful because it carries cholesterol

from other parts of the body to the liver, where it can be removed. Higher levels of HDL mean you have a lower chance of getting heart disease.

3. Testing is the only way to know if your cholesterol levels are within a healthy range.

There are no signs or warnings that let you know if your cholesterol levels are not what they should be. But a blood test can let you know where you stand.

4. Even young people should keep track of their cholesterol levels. This isn't just a problem for older adults. The American Heart Association says that all people 20 and over who do not have cardiovascular disease should have his or her cholesterol levels checked at least every four-to-six years.

And the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests children and teens have their cholesterol tested once between the ages of 9 and 11, and again between the ages of 17 and 21.

5. To help control your cholesterol, cut down on foods high in saturated and trans fats.

These are fatty meats; baked goods (like cookies and cakes); and whole-milk dairy products and solid fats, like butter. Working out helps you reach and keep a healthy weight. And do not smoke!