



## St. Mary's County Health Department

### NEWS RELEASE

[www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org)

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH HEROES

LEONARDTOWN, MD (February 20, 2007) – Taking steps now to prepare for emergencies can make a big difference in helping you deal with and recover from a crises. No one likes to think about the possibility of an emergency, but by preparing for the worst and hoping for the best, people can take an active role in reducing the risk to their health and safety should the unexpected occur. Do you know someone who has been proactive in their planning and has taken the steps necessary to ensure the safety of their home, business or community? If so, The St. Mary's County Health Department would like to hear from you. This year, during National Public Health Week, April 2 – 8, the St. Mary's County Health Department will celebrate by holding its annual Public Health Heroes Breakfast to honor people who live or work in St. Mary's County and who, through emergency or disaster preparedness, promote public health, in their daily lives.

The health department is inviting you to nominate people or groups that you know

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professionally or personally who have made an emergency plan and taken the necessary steps to to carry out that plan should the need arise. Nominations must be submitted or postmarked by Friday, March 9, 2007.

Emergency preparedness is the focus of this year's theme for National Public Health Week – *Taking the First Step*.. The theme focuses on helping those most vulnerable to potential public health threats take the first step in developing a preparedness plan. By identifying significant barriers to preparation that vulnerable populations face and providing them with the resources they need to create a plan that is right for them, individuals and communities can help to significantly reduce the risks to the health and safety of those people who may have the most difficult time in an emergency. Mothers with children, hourly workers without health plans or stable employment, and people with chronic illnesses all face difficult challenges and are often disproportionately affect by disasters.

The health department is looking for individuals or groups who promote one or more of the many aspects of preparedness including, making a comprehensive preparedness plan, addressing the needs of special populations, preparing businesses and organizations for the impact of large scale emergencies, and taking a lead role in organizing and motivating individuals to take action and be prepared. There are many ways that individuals and groups make St. Mary's County more prepared for the unexpected.

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Please honor their work and passion for public health and safety by nominating them to be 2007 Public Health Heroes. Request nomination forms via e-mail by calling 301-475-4318. Nomination Forms may be picked up at the health department 21580 Peabody St. Leonardtown, MD, local libraries, or may be printed from the website at [www.smchd.org](http://www.smchd.org). Nomination forms should be returned no later than March 9, 2007. Please drop your nomination off at the health department or mail nomination forms to P.O. Box 316, Leonardtown, MD 20650. You may also FAX nominations to 301-475-4350. All nominators and honorees will be invited to an award ceremony breakfast on Thurs., April 5, 2007, at St. Andrews Church, 44078 St. Andrews Church Rd., California. Dave Zylak, St. Mary's County Public Safety Director, will be keynote speaker.

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