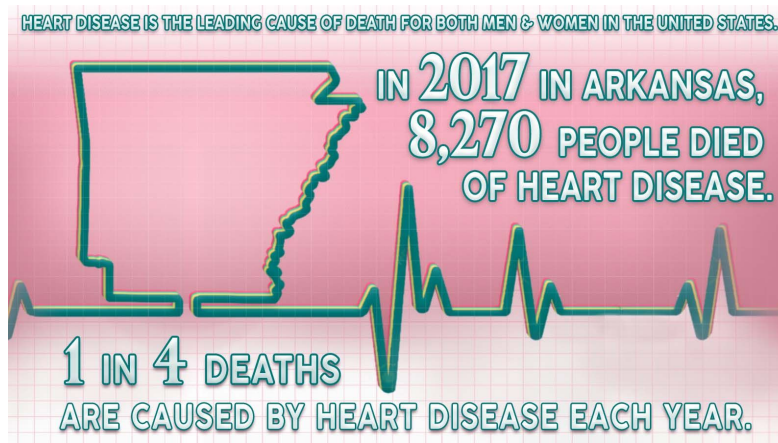




Arkansas House Newsletter

February 6, 2020

February is American Heart Month



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States, and 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease each year. In 2017 in Arkansas, a total of 8,270 people died of heart disease. February is American Heart Month. Its purpose is to promote the importance of heart health and increase awareness of the risk factors of heart disease.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, half of all Americans have at least one of the top three risk factors for heart disease- high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking. Other conditions and behaviors that affect your risk for heart disease include obesity, diabetes, physical inactivity, and unhealthy eating patterns.

Smoking, the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, is also one of the greatest risk factors for developing heart disease. Smoking damages the heart and blood vessels very quickly, but the damage is repaired quickly for most smokers who quit.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Act 580, which would have phased in an increase in the age a person must be to buy tobacco products like cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, and vaping products that contain

nicotine. However, a new federal law signed by President Trump supersedes the 2019 state law, and as of December 27, 2019, the nationwide minimum age to buy tobacco products has been raised to 21. With this law now in place at the federal level, we expect to see fewer teens begin smoking or vaping in the first place. You can choose healthy habits to help prevent heart disease. Arkansans are encouraged to make healthy changes to lower their risk of developing heart disease such as controlling their cholesterol and blood pressure, living an active lifestyle, and eating healthy. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you smoke, know that quitting will lower your risk for heart disease. For free help to quit smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or go to smokefree.gov or cdc.gov/tips.