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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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May is National Arthritis Month

Arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and every day it limits activities of more than seven million people. Arthritis affects almost three million Floridians of all ages.

Arthritis means inflammation of the joints. (arth – joint; itis – inflammation). It refers to more than 130 different conditions that affect joints and the tissues around the joints such as muscles and tendons. The most common conditions are osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, lupus, gout and scleroderma.

Contrary to what many believe, arthritis is not a normal process of aging – almost half of the elderly population never gets arthritis. In fact, arthritis can affect people of all ages – three out of five people with arthritis are under age 65.

Some types of arthritis can be attributed to genetic (inherited) factors. Other types of arthritis are preventable. Being overweight is a main – controllable – risk factor that contributes to arthritis and gout.

The pain and disability often caused by arthritis can be reduced through early diagnosis and appropriate management of the condition – through weight control, exercise, physical therapy, medication, surgery and self-management techniques.

Warning signs of arthritis may include any of the following signs, in or around a joint, for more than two weeks:

- Pain
- Stiffness
- Swelling
- Problems moving the joint
- Redness
- Warmth

For more information call the Arthritis Foundation, toll-free, at 1-800-283-7800.

Today, there is a brighter future for people with arthritis.

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The Mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity.