



news from

Erie County Clerk Michael P. Kearns



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CONTACT: Mae Roberts  
Erie County Clerk  
Communications Director  
716-573-1551  
[maeghan.roberts@erie.gov](mailto:maeghan.roberts@erie.gov)

Melanie Griffis  
Mercy Hospital of Buffalo  
Public Relations Manager  
716-828- 3747; Cell 716-289-6317  
[mgriffis@chsbuffalo.org](mailto:mgriffis@chsbuffalo.org)

**ERIE COUNTY CLERK MICKEY KEARNS & MERCY HOSPITAL OF BUFFALO  
ANNOUNCE RESULTS FROM THE 'HEART HEALTHY BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS'**

*Heart disease and stroke remain top health concerns for Erie County*

**Buffalo, NY-** Erie County Clerk Mickey Kearns and C.J. Urlaub, President and CEO of Mercy Hospital of Buffalo, recently announced the successful results of the 'Heart Healthy Blood Pressure Screenings' conducted at five of the Erie County Auto Bureaus during National Heart Month in February. This first-time program was a collaborative effort between the Clerk's office and the hospital to help fight heart disease and stroke in our community.

According to the 'Heart Healthy Blood Pressure Screenings' report and findings, registered nurses from Catholic Health conducted a total of 220 blood pressure readings throughout the month of February at the auto bureaus. Of those 220 blood pressure readings, 38% (84 participants) were found to have high blood pressure.

This result is indicative of an overall health issue in Erie County as it relates to stoke, cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. Research shows that cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in Erie County and the No. 1 cause of death in the United States. A resident in Erie County is 33% more likely to die from heart disease than the average U.S citizen, and 60% more likely to die from stroke than the aggregate New York State range.

Addressing this data, Clerk Kearns and Mr. Urlaub stressed the significant importance for residents in Erie County to have their blood pressure regularly checked. According to Erie County Community Health Assessment, only 58% of Buffalo and surrounding area residents report visiting their doctors to have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked, compared to 75% nationally. Clerk Kearns and Mr. Urlaub highlighted the benefit of the medical field and government working together to reach out to the community and curve the trend in cardiovascular related diseases in the county.

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“It is discouraging to see numbers that Erie County residents experience higher than average rates of cardiovascular disease than the average citizen in this country and state,” said Clerk Kearns. “The Heart Healthy Blood Pressure Screenings was an excellent initiative to begin addressing this health concern in a different and innovative way. Partnering the great resources at Mercy Hospital of Buffalo with the high volume of traffic seen at the Erie County Auto Bureaus offered a unique opportunity to address health in our community. I look forward to future ventures and will continue to urge residents to get their blood pressure taken.”

“Our goal as one of the largest hospitals serving the Buffalo region and a partner in this *Healthy Heart Auto Bureau Blood Pressure Screening* program is to help make our community healthier by reducing the prevalence of heart disease and stroke,” said C.J. Urlaub, President and CEO of Mercy Hospital. “We are pleased that this first-time effort to offer free blood pressure screening in this non-traditional setting of DMV offices was effective, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with the Clerk’s office to offer similar health screenings in the future.”

Joining Clerk Kearns and Mr. Urlaub to advocate the importance of blood pressure screenings was Angela Royster, an employee at the Erie County Auto Bureau who took part in the February event. Ms. Royster was found to have high blood pressure and after following up with her doctor, was able to address potentially serious health problems.

“I commend Ms. Royster for sharing her story and experience with the blood pressure screenings,” said Kearns. “It is stories like this that emphasize the necessity to be pervasive about these health concerns. While it is easy in our hectic day to day lives to put health and wellness on the backburner, the advantages of catching a health issue early on is far greater than staying in the dark. Knowing your blood pressure can literally save your life.”

In November 2017, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology issued new guidelines that change how high blood pressure, or hypertension, is diagnosed. Previously, it wasn’t until an adult’s blood pressure reached 140 mmHg or higher systolic or 90 mmHg diastolic or higher that high blood pressure was diagnosed. According to the new parameters, high blood pressure should be treated at 130/80 rather than 140/90, as that is the point when our risk for heart attack, stroke, and other consequences for hypertension almost doubles. The highest blood pressure reading or hypertension was recorded at 200/101 while the lowest blood pressure reading or hypotension was recorded at 106/58.