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ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS TO CELEBRATE LUNG HEALTH DAY

(LANCASTER, CA – OCTOBER 17, 2008) — October 19-25, 2008 marks National Respiratory Care Week with Wednesday, October 22 being Lung Health Day. In honor of national Lung Health Day, Don Kinkade, a registered respiratory therapist and director of respiratory therapy services for Antelope Valley Hospital (AVH) encourages residents to stay safe and breathe easier during wildfire season.

“Living in southern California, wildfire season becomes as routine as the weather changing – but the effects of poor air quality during fire season are very real,” said Kinkade. “Those with respiratory problems such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis and those with chronic heart disease should monitor their breathing and limit exposure to airborne matter. If they have difficulty breathing, they should contact their doctor immediately.”

Kinkade explained that the American Lung Association is a great reference for anyone who is concerned about the air quality and the effects of the wildfires. The American Lung Association recommends people with respiratory problems and chronic heart disease should:

- Stay inside as much as possible, with doors, windows and fireplace dampers shut and preferably with clean air circulating through air conditioners and/or air cleaners. Use air conditioners on the recirculation setting so outside air will not be moved into the room.
- Due to the higher levels of pollutants in some areas, there is a possibility of experiencing increased symptoms. If you are experiencing symptoms, please try to contact your physician and follow your action plan as prescribed.
- If outdoor trips in smoky areas are necessary, breathe through a damp cloth to help filter out particles in the air.

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- People with asthma should check with their physician regarding any changes in medication that may be needed to cope with the smoky conditions.
- People using oxygen should not adjust their levels of intake before consulting a physician.
- If pulmonary symptoms are not relieved by the usual medicines, seek medical attention. Symptoms to watch for: wheezing, shortness of breath, difficulty taking a full breath, chest heaviness, light headedness, and dizziness. If you have any concerns or questions please contact your physician.
- If you develop a persistent cough, or difficult or painful breathing, call your physician. The onset of symptoms can appear as late as 24 to 48 hours after exposure and that smoke can remain in areas for many days after the fires have ended.

“Our respiratory therapists pride themselves on caring for our community for inpatients and outpatient services at AVH,” said Edward Mirzabegian, AVH Chief Executive Officer.

“Because of these trained professionals, AVH helps the community breathe a little easier.”

For more information on respiratory health please contact the American Lung Association by calling 1-800-LUNGUSA or visit www.lungusa.org.

About Antelope Valley Hospital

Celebrating more than 50 years of caring for the community, Antelope Valley Hospital, a facility of Antelope Valley Healthcare District, is a non-profit, 420-bed hospital that was founded in 1955. The hospital is dedicated to providing quality care and services to everyone in the Antelope Valley. AV Hospital is located at 1600 West Avenue J in Lancaster, California. For further information, please visit www.avhospital.org or call 661-949-5000.

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