

Health fair with a heart



James Clark photos

Dabe Banerjee of Mid-South Respicare tests the oxygen level and heart rate of Geneva Scoggins during Saturday morning's health fair at River Park Hospital.

Residents take advantage of free screenings

By JAMES CLARK
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Heart disease is the No. 1 killer in America.

To try and reduce their risk of heart trouble, hundreds of local residents attended a Heart Healthy Fair yesterday at River Park Hospital.

Among the services offered, the health fair had a free glucose and cholesterol check provided by the hospital.

"Those screenings have been tremendously popular," said River Park marketing director Claudia Hall. "We had 90 people pre-register and we've had around 30 walk-ins so we've been busy."

According to the American Heart Association, 80 million Americans had one or more form of cardiovascular disease in 2006. That year, 865,000 deaths were attributed to heart disease.

River Park's newest physician, cardiologist Dr. Robert Benson, was in attendance yesterday to answer heart health questions.

"A number of the risk factors associated with heart disease can be con-



Sandra Kirby gets her blood drawn for a free cholesterol test by River Park phlebotomist Della Hudnall.

trolled to a point," said Dr. Benson. "Smoking, high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, obesity and a sedentary lifestyle all fall into that category. High stress and heavy alcohol consumption are also controllable factors that have been linked to heart disease. Lifestyle plays a very big part in the onset of heart disease so screenings like these are a good



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tool for keeping an eye on heart health."

A few factors are uncontrollable such as age, gender, and family history. Men are at a greater risk of heart attack than women and 83 percent of people who die of coronary disease are 65 or older, according to statistics provided by River Park Hospital.