

Announcement

American Heart Month — February 2016

February is American Heart Month. The leading cause of death in the United States continues to be heart disease. Although the death rate for heart disease has been decreasing (1,2), too few U.S. adults get adequate physical activity, eat a healthy diet, avoid smoking, and control their blood pressure and cholesterol. More than one in three U.S. adults have at least one type of cardiovascular disease (CVD), which includes heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure. Nearly one in three deaths are attributed to CVD each year (1). In the United States about 17% of health care dollars are spent on CVD each year, which amounts to more than \$316 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity (1).

CVD and its risk factors are not distributed evenly across the U.S. population. Certain groups, defined by age, sex, race, ethnicity, or geography, have higher levels than others (1). Disproportionately high rates of avoidable CVD deaths are found among black men and among adults aged 30–74 years living in the Southeast, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to alleviate disparities and improve health (3). Black men experience a heart disease death rate twice that for white women, who have the lowest rate (4). CDC aims to reduce these disparities through increased use of clinical protocols (5), partnerships with national, state, and local organizations

(including the Million Hearts initiative), and educational efforts targeting persons at risk for CVD.

In observance of American Heart Month 2016, CDC is focusing on increasing targeted consumer and health care provider messaging and providing resources specifically for black men and their health care providers. Additional information is online regarding American Heart Month (<http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/news-media/events/heart-month.html>) and prevention of heart disease (<http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/learn-prevent/healthy-is-strong.html>).

References

1. Mozaffarian D, Benjamin EJ, Go AS, et al.; American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2016 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 2016;133:e38–360. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000366>.
2. Mozaffarian D, Benjamin EJ, Go AS, et al.; American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. Heart disease and stroke statistics—2015 update: a report from the American Heart Association. *Circulation* 2015;131:e29–322. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1161/CIR.0000000000000152>.
3. CDC. Vital signs: avoidable deaths from heart disease, stroke, and hypertensive disease—United States, 2001–2010. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2013;62:721–7.
4. CDC. CDC WONDER. Underlying cause of death 1999–2014. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2016. <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>.
5. CDC. Evidence-based treatment protocols for improving blood pressure control. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, CDC; 2013. <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/resources/protocols.html>.