



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION ENCOURAGE FLORIDIANS TO IMPROVE THEIR HEART HEALTH

-February 5 is National Wear Red Day-

TALLAHASSEE—In recognition of American Heart Month—February—the Florida Department of Health (DOH) and the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) encourage all Floridians to take steps to improve their heart health. In 2008, 25 percent, or 41,931 deaths, were attributed to heart disease, making it the leading cause of death in Florida.

“Wearing red on February 5 is a gesture to raise awareness about heart disease, specifically in women,” said State Surgeon General Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H. “If our message about improving your heart health reaches and resonates with people in middle age or younger, we could change the health of Floridians for the better for decades to come.”

“During American Heart Month, Floridians are paying special attention to their heart health,” said AHCA Secretary Thomas W. Arnold. “FloridaHealthFinder.gov provides an opportunity for them to research heart disease and learn how the health care facilities in their area are performing in relation to heart-related illnesses and procedures.”

FloridaHealthFinder.gov is the only Web site of its kind to connect a health encyclopedia and symptom navigator to consumer information about a particular health care facility. Floridians can use these tools on FloridaHealthFinder.gov to learn more about their heart health and symptoms related to heart disease. They can also use FloridaHealthFinder.gov to compare health care facilities in relation to their outcome performance for heart-related illnesses and procedures, such as heart failure, heart attacks, cardiac pacemaker implantation and much more.

In a recent publication of *Circulation*, a Journal of the American Heart Association, the seven health factors and behaviors that can help improve cardiovascular health are described. They are:

- Never smoked or quit more than one year ago;
- Body mass index less than 25;



- Physical activity of at least 150 minutes (moderate intensity) or 75 minutes (vigorous intensity) each week;
- Four to five of the key components of a healthy diet consistent with current American Heart Association guideline recommendations;
- Total cholesterol of less than 200;
- Blood pressure below 120/80;
- Fasting blood glucose less than 100.

To help people improve their heart health, the American Heart Association has developed a new online resource – *My Life Check* (www.heart.org/MyLifeCheck). The short assessment easily identifies the seven goals for ideal health and notes where a person is on the spectrum, while additional tools and information offer specific action steps to improve the measurements and track personal progress toward better health.

The Department of Health promotes, protects and improves the health of all people in Florida. Additional information about improving heart health can be found on the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program website at www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/Heart/index.html.

The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. AHCA administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 41,000 health care facilities and 43 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics. For more information, please visit www.ahca.myflorida.com.

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