



American Heart Association® | American Stroke Association®
Learn and Livesm

Overview

The American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to reducing disability and death from heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases, which kills over 870,000 Americans each year. That's a life every 36 seconds. Furthermore, cardiovascular disease kills over 480,000 female lives every year causing one death per minute.

The American Heart Association was founded in 1924 and today is one of the world's premier health organizations. We have 12 regional affiliates that include about 2,000 offices in local communities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Nationwide, we have more than 22.5 million volunteers and supporters who help us carry out our mission.

Preventing heart disease and stroke is now — and always has been — our first priority. To further this goal, we spent over \$543 million in fiscal year 2005-06 on research support, public and professional education, and community programs.

Research we've funded has contributed to many important developments including CPR, life-extending drugs, bypass surgery, pacemakers and surgical techniques to repair heart defects.

We also sponsor professional development seminars and meetings throughout the year. Top medical researchers, scientists and physicians present papers on the latest developments in cardiovascular medicine, so doctors and their patients can benefit from recent discoveries.

The American Heart Association and its division, the American Stroke Association, promote the benefits of good health through community service programs. We continually incorporate the latest medical advances into programs that help people live healthier, more productive lives. We're also active in improving emergency care in communities across America.

We implement public education programs on how to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. And each year our educational messages promoting good heart health are targeted toward schools, businesses and healthcare sites. We reach millions of Americans with posters, brochures, booklets and public service announcements.

Our advocacy efforts include furthering tobacco control legislation, improving emergency and in-hospital care and increasing physical activity in schools.

Each February, we host events throughout the country in support of American Heart Month. American Heart Month was initiated by Congress on December 30, 1963, to recognize the importance of the battle of heart disease. American Heart Month helps increase the awareness about life threatening heart conditions and emphasizes the importance of raising funds for cardiovascular research.

Diseases of the heart remain America's No. 1 killer. Stroke, the nation's No. 3 killer, is a leading cause of severe long-term disability. And, as the U.S. population continues to age, more people are at higher risk of these diseases. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.

###