



Contacts: Jane Berg
UnitedHealth Group
612-910-6471 (cell)
952-945-7508

Roger Rollman
UnitedHealthcare
336-601-0423 (cell)
336-540-7636

(For Immediate Release)

“PEACE OF HEART” CAMPAIGN COMES TO ATLANTA TO HELP FIGHT HEART DISEASE EPIDEMIC AMONG MINORITIES

Coalition of African American Leaders and Physicians, Community and Preventive Health Organizations, and Laboratory Corporation of America Work With UnitedHealth Group and United Health Foundation in Effort to Help Atlantans Lead Heart-Healthy Lives

Hallmark of Campaign’s Health Screening Events Is Personalized Follow-Up

ATLANTA (July 26, 2008) – The PEACE of Heart campaign today moved to Atlanta, launching a second preventive health screening and educational event as part of a national initiative to help fight the epidemic of heart-related disease afflicting African Americans, low-income minority groups and other medically underserved communities. The campaign hopes to inspire people to lead heart-healthy lives through preventive screenings, education and hands-on support.

The goal is to move beyond mere screening and help those at risk connect with a physician and other health care professionals to urge preventive steps that promote heart-healthy lives. Participants will be encouraged to establish a “medical home” at a community health center or elsewhere. PEACE of Heart is also unique because of the personalized follow-up that will happen the week after each screening to share screening results and again after about 90 days to ensure participants are adhering to any recommended treatment program.

In Atlanta, PEACE of Heart will host a screening event on Saturday, July 26, 2008 at Southside Medical Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Participants will be screened for blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and diabetes.

“At United Health Foundation, we believe there is an urgent need to address the prevalence of heart disease in the African American and other minority communities,” said Reed V. Tuckson, M.D., United Health Foundation Board Member and UnitedHealth Group Executive Vice President and Chief of Medical Affairs. “Here in Atlanta, only 4 percent of people with insurance living in the neighborhood around Southside Medical Center have been tested for bad cholesterol levels over the past 12 months. PEACE of Heart aims to change this disheartening statistic.

“Everyone – individuals, the private sector, non-profits, and policy makers – needs to make strides to help people lead the lives that will prevent heart disease and to support the delivery of better cardiovascular care,” Dr. Tuckson added.

A unique coalition of minority groups, physicians, community health advocates and companies in the health care sector launched the PEACE of Heart campaign earlier this month with health screenings in Chicago. After today’s event in Atlanta, which is being held in conjunction with campaign partner National Medical Association’s annual conference, the initiative will also roll out to New Orleans,

Washington, D.C., Miami, and New York City. The campaign also includes outreach to approximately 20,000 physicians in the six screening cities to encourage the use of clinical evidence in detecting, treating and preventing heart-related health issues. The acronym PEACE encapsulates the core elements of the program: Partnership, Evaluation, Action, Community and Education.

“In combating heart disease, it is critical to remind physicians about the importance of complying with evidence-based guidance for all their patients, especially their minority patients who often experience disparities in clinical care delivery and outcomes,” said Mohammad Akhter, M.D., MPH, Executive Director of the National Medical Association. “As a coalition, we can do that much more effectively than alone.”

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, and is the number one killer of African Americans and Hispanics. Obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol – all risk factors for heart disease and stroke – show no sign of decline.

The campaign will work to identify people at risk in underserved communities in six cities through free screenings at community health centers selected with the help of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). LabCorp®, another of the campaign’s partners, will test cholesterol and blood glucose levels at no cost to participants.

The campaign partners are:

- [American Heart Association \(AHA\)](#)
- [Association of Black Cardiologists](#)
- [LabCorp](#)
- [National Association of Community Health Centers](#)
- [National Medical Association](#)
- [National Minority Quality Forum](#)
- [RainbowPUSH Coalition](#)
- [United Health Foundation](#)
- [UnitedHealth Group](#) (NYSE: UNH)

As a result of a high prevalence of hypertension, African Americans have a 1.5 times greater rate of heart disease death and 1.8 times greater rate of fatal stroke than Caucasians, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Heart disease, stroke and all other cardiovascular diseases account for 33 percent of deaths among African American males and 38 percent of deaths among African American females, according to recent statistics cited by the AHA.

While heart disease is not as pervasive in the Hispanic population as it is among African Americans, it is the number one killer among Hispanics, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. There is also a higher prevalence of certain risk factors that contribute to heart disease among certain Hispanic populations. For example, Mexican Americans are more likely to be overweight or obese and are more likely to have diabetes than Caucasians, according to AHA.

The risk factors that contribute to heart disease often go undetected in minority communities and treatment can fall short, because those with low incomes do not routinely visit a doctor and thus many do not have a “medical home” which can serve as a source of regular care.

The American Heart Association will make its extensive educational and community-based resources available to the campaign. At the same time, the National Medical Association and coalition partners from the Association of Black Cardiologists and the National Minority Quality Forum will reach out to practicing physicians to highlight the importance of using evidence-based guidance to deliver more effective preventive care and treatment among minorities.

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