



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Mayor,

Baltimore City

250 City Hall • Baltimore Maryland 21202 • 410-396-3835 • Fax: 410-576-9425

Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 1, 2012

CONTACT

Ryan O'Doherty

(410) 818-4269

ryan.odoherty@baltimorecity.gov

Mayor Rawlings-Blake Kicks Off American Heart Awareness Month in Baltimore

BALTIMORE, MD (February 1, 2011)—Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake was joined by officials from the Baltimore City Health Department, the American Heart Association (Mid-Atlantic Affiliate), and St. Agnes Hospital to challenge city residents to improve their health at events taking place during American Heart Month. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in Baltimore City and the leading cause of death overall. Heart disease is a key contributor to the life expectancy gap that persists among city neighborhoods.

“I want to thank our partners for working with us to raise awareness about heart health this month,” said Mayor Rawlings-Blake. “Many people know that the key to improving their health is a diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium, saturated and trans fats, and cholesterol. Unfortunately, more women die of cardiovascular disease than the next five leading causes of death combined, including all forms of cancer. We need individuals to begin taking responsibility for their lives—and setting an example for young people—by taking control of their heart health.”

To reduce the burden of heart disease locally, Baltimore City is partnering with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the “Million Hearts” initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over the next 5 years. Mayor Rawlings-Blake encouraged all Baltimore residents to know and practice the ABC’S of Heart Health:

- A – Appropriate aspirin therapy
- B – Bloodpressure control
- C – Cholesterol management
- S – Smoking cessation

“Heart disease is the root cause of 15 percent of all premature deaths in the city,” said Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot. “A healthy heart is the secret to a longer life. Start today by

making healthy food choices, exercising more often, quitting smoking, and scheduling regular blood pressure and cholesterol screenings.”

According to the American Heart Association, cardiovascular disease kills approximately 450,000 women each year—about one every minute. Mayor Rawlings-Blake asked residents to know their heart health numbers and the risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease.

“We are proud to partner with Mayor Rawlings-Blake and Baltimore City to educate our community about the risk factors of this life-changing disease,” said Dr. Shannon Winakur, medical director of the new Women’s Heart Center at Saint Agnes Hospital. “Through events that educate the public about heart disease prevention, like Saint Agnes’ Red Dress Sunday, our goal is that one day, the #1 threat to women will no longer be heart disease.”

All this month, Baltimore City is helping to increase awareness about heart disease among women and their families by partnering with St. Agnes Hospital and the American Heart Association (Mid-Atlantic Chapter) and encouraging women to “Go Red” by wearing the color red.

“We are excited to raise awareness year round about heart disease prevention and provide the educational resources to help the citizens of Baltimore live longer and healthier lives,” added Yvette Mingo, Executive Director and Vice President of Development of American Heart Association (Mid-Atlantic Affiliate).

Local “Go Red” events planned in February include:

- The American Heart Association’s National Wear Red Day, Friday, February 3, 2012. For more information, visit <http://www.goredforwomen.org/wearredday/index.html>.
- The American Heart Association’s 5th Annual Macy’s Go Red For Women Health Fair & Fashion Show, Saturday, February 4 at Towson Town Center, 813 Dulaney Valley Road in Towson. For more information, contact Annette Fisher at 410-637-4569 or Annette.Fisher@heart.org.
- The 8th Annual Red Dress Sunday event, Sunday, February 12. Contact Krista Crockett at 410-368-2773 or kcrockett@stagnes.org for more information.
- Keep the Beat – Dance For Your Heart, Friday, February 17 at the Vollmer Center at Cylburn Arboretum. This event for city seniors is hosted by the Health Department’s Office of Aging & CARE Services. For registration information, visit www.baltimorehealth.org.

For more information about heart disease awareness events, programs, and activities, visit www.baltimorehealth.org.

###

Visit our Website @ www.baltimorecity.gov