

February 7, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Six hundred of our community's finest took to the Naples Beach Club Hotel's dance floor last Saturday to Zumba, Hip Hop, Tango and Tai Chi their way to better health at NCH's third annual *Day of Dance for Your Health*, in conjunction with Spirit of Women's *Day of Dance* (<http://www.dayofdance.org/about.html>).

Chaired by **Pat Read**, Administrative Director, this event focused on ways of preventing coronary heart disease, the single leading cause of death for American women and men. Spirit of Women's *Day of Dance*, besides sharing dance as a way to take steps for a healthier life, also educates consumers on a variety of cardiovascular conditions such as atrial fibrillation, stroke, and heart attacks in women.

Masters of Ceremonies, Director of Marketing **Debbie Curry** and Director of the NCH Wellness Centers **Beth Jameson**, interspersed the dance by introducing four NCH professionals who addressed the following topics related to women's heart care: **Dr. David Axline**, MD, FACS—"Don't Miss a Beat—a Primer on Atrial Fibrillation." **Kelly Daly**, NCH Director of Internal Compliance—"Surprise, You Have a Blockage." **Dr. Karen Henrichsen**, DO—"Balancing Life Stress and Your Best Self Now." **Dr. Shona Velamakanni**, MD, FACC—"Secrets to a Women's Heart."

More than 40 NCH colleagues measured blood pressures and shared advice on healthy aging, joint health, and other healthcare learning opportunities. Diabetic educators also shared essential tips. Prior to the formal presentations, the Barron Collier High School Dance Team and Dance Argentine Tango entertained the audience.

Throughout the event – which drew the largest crowd in its history—the American Heart Association's "10 Most Common Myths" were repeated:

- 1) **"I'm too young to worry about heart disease."** Not true. How you live now affects your risk later.
- 2) **"I'd know if I had high blood pressure because there would be warning signs."** High blood pressure is called the "silent killer" because you don't usually know you have it.
- 3) **"I'll know when I'm having a heart attack because I'll have chest pain."** Not necessarily. Although it's common to have chest pain or discomfort, a heart attack may cause subtle symptoms.
- 4) **"Diabetes won't threaten my heart as long as I take my medication."** Even when blood sugar levels are under control, you're still at increased risk for heart disease and stroke.
- 5) **"Heart disease runs in my family, so there's nothing I can do to prevent it."** Regardless of family history, you can take steps to dramatically reduce your risk.
- 6) **"I don't need to have my cholesterol checked until I'm middle-aged."** You should start at age 20.
- 7) **"Heart failure means the heart stops beating."** With heart failure, the heart keeps working, but it doesn't pump blood as well as it should.
- 8) **"This pain in my legs is a sign of aging and has nothing to do with my heart."** Leg pain in the muscles may be a sign of a condition called peripheral artery disease from blocked arteries in the legs.
- 9) **"My heart is beating fast so I'm having a heart attack."** Some variation in heart rate is normal. Heart rate speeds up during exercise or excitement and slows down when you're sleeping.
- 10) **"I should avoid exercise after having a heart attack."** No! Research shows that heart attack survivors who are regularly physically active and make other heart-healthy changes live longer.

Lessons and words, education and inspiration to live by—literally!

Respectfully,



Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. Feel free to share *Straight Talk* and ask anyone to email me at allen.weiss@nchmd.org to be added.