



MSV members speak out on heart health

9 March 2012

On Mar. 9, several Medical Society of Virginia (MSV) members, including Sec. of Health and Human Resources **William A. Hazel Jr., M.D.**, Virginia Health Commissioner **Karen Remley, M.D., M.B.A., FAAP**, **Siobhan Dunnivant, M.D., Del. John O'Bannon, M.D.** and **Del. Scott Garrett, M.D.**, showed support for Virginia's heart health efforts by attending the heart health press conference hosted by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). During the event, Virginia Health Information shared the following statistics:

- The number of heart attack deaths in Virginia declined by 46 percent between 2000 to 2010.
- The number of stroke deaths in Virginia dropped by 38 percent between 2000 to 2010.
- There were 1,866 fewer heart-attack deaths in 2010 compared to 2000 and there were 821 fewer stroke deaths.
- Heart attack deaths in women decreased by 49 percent and stroke deaths decreased by 35 percent from 2000 to 2010.
- The difference in heart attack rates between African American and Caucasian women declined from 22 percent to two percent.

Each of the speakers at the event encouraged Virginians to work toward continuing to reduce the number of deaths resulting from heart attack and strokes. Del. O'Bannon encouraged everyone to try to prevent heart health issues before they get too severe. Del. Garrett shared the story of the heart attack he suffered in 2004 and asked that everyone help raise education and awareness efforts. Dr. Dunnivant spoke on the importance of knowing the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and stroke and seeking immediate treatment.

"Knowing the signs of heart attack and strokes can protect and save the life of someone you know and love," Dr. Dunnivant said. "Initiating early intervention will help prevent long-term effects and death."

The five major symptoms of a heart attack are:

- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck or back
- Feeling weak, light-headed or faint
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder
- Shortness of breath

Women may experience subtler signs, including: nausea, dizziness, fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, abdominal pain.

Janet Wright, M.D., FAAC, executive director of Million Hearts, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) spoke about the Million Hearts initiative. Launched by HHS, the Centers for Disease Control and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, this initiative aims to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in the United States over the next five years. With this initiative, they encourage people who need treatment to focus on the "ABCS"—aspirin for people at risk, blood pressure control, cholesterol management and smoking cessation—to help prevent heart attacks and strokes. [Click here](#) for more information.



Several MSV members show support for Virginia's heart health efforts led by the Virginia Department of Health.

Medical Society of Virginia

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