

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR
EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT
15 PARK CIRCLE, SUITE 209
CENTERPORT, NY 11721



CONTACT: **LIZ ALEXANDER**
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE AIDE
OFFICE: (631) 854-4500
FAX: (631) 854-4503
elizabeth.alexander@suffolkcountyny.gov

MEDIA RELEASE

FEBRUARY 5, 2016



From left to right: Michele Gervat of American Heart Association, Marc Hamroff the Chair of the Long Island Board of Directors for the American Heart Association, Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. Robin Vitake of the American Heart Association and Danielle Felico from the American Heart Association



Heart Disease: Just Beat It!



Hauppauge, NY: In recognition of February being American Heart Health Month and the 13th anniversary of *National Wear Red Day*, Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D., was joined by the American Heart Association to encourage communities, health professionals and families to work together to make heart healthy decisions. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States and 1 of every 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. Although progress has been made to reduce deaths due to heart attacks, efforts to educate and raise awareness must continue to dispel many of the common dangerous myths surrounding heart disease.

“As a disease predominantly attributed to men, it is imperative that we talk about the devastating impacts it has on women. Heart Disease kills more women every year than any other disease, but the good news is that it can be prevented 80% of the time through healthy choices. That is why raising awareness to the risks and preventative measures we can take is key in combatting this health crisis,” Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D. stated.

Members of the Suffolk County Health Committee spoke up in support of raising awareness, “Making residents aware of health concerns, ranging from personal health to environmental health, has always been a top priority of mine. During the month of February, “Heart Month”, doctors suggest that we should make ‘control’ our goal. Checking your blood pressure regularly can help detect early onset of heart related conditions. I urge everyone to take an interest in their health by eating healthy and exercising,” stated Legislator Martinez.

"I so appreciate the attention Chairman Spencer and groups like the American Heart Association bring to heart disease as a public health crisis, with great initiatives like National Wear Red Day. We must continue to advocate and educate to raise awareness regarding the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, nutrition, and preventive medical care to reverse the devastation of cardiovascular diseases," stated Vice Chair of the Suffolk County Health Committee Legislator Bridget Fleming.

Marc Hamroff, the Chair of the Long Island Board of Directors for the American Heart Association spoke about the needed research taking place related to women’s risk of heart disease and stroke, “Men and women alike can experience the well-known heart-attack symptoms like chest pains and breaking out in a cold sweat. But women can also have less recognizable symptoms such as pain in the stomach, jaw, neck or back, nausea and shortness of breath. As a result, women’s healthcare providers may misinterpret these symptoms leading to delay in diagnosis. To address this, Congress passed the HEART for Women Act, requiring the FDA to report clinical trials based on gender.”

The prevalence of heart disease among women is undeniable with 1 in 3 women affected by the disease in the United States; however, studies that show only 1 in 5 women are aware that cardiovascular disease is their greatest health risk. These numbers make the need for awareness and education throughout our communities abundantly clear.

Thanks to the work of the American Heart Association and their ongoing campaign to raise awareness around heart disease through *National Wear Red Day*, significant progress has been made to promote healthier lifestyles and prevention:

- Nearly 90% of women have made at least one healthy behavior change.
- More than one-third of women have lost weight.
- More than 50% of women have increased their exercise.
- 6 out of 10 women have changed their diets.
- More than 40% of women have checked their cholesterol levels.
- One third of women have talked with their doctors about developing heart health plans.
- Today, nearly 300 fewer women die from heart disease and stroke each day.
- Death in women has decreased by more than 30 percent over the past 10 years.¹

For more resources and information on heart health please log on to: <http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>

¹ <https://www.goredforwomen.org/get-involved/national-wear-red-day/go-red-for-women-10-years-of-changing-hearts/>