

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Phil Chang
312/423-4924
pchang@hlbcomm.com

Her Heart Community Comes to Birmingham Where Risks of Cardiac Disease for Women are Among Highest in Nation

Birmingham resident and heart attack survivor Nichele Hoskins will share her inspiring story to help others understand the life-saving benefits of early detection

Educational event also features Dr. Jennifer Mieres, a nationally renowned cardiologist and expert on women's heart health issues

(Birmingham, AL, October XX, 2006) — The *Her Heart Community* initiative, a two-day educational conference featuring the latest information on the risks, diagnoses and treatment of heart disease in women, will be in Birmingham on November 1-2. The first day (at Café Dupont, 6:30 – 8 p.m.) is exclusively for physicians and other health practitioners, while the second (The Summit Club from 11:45 – 1:30 p.m.) is open to the general public.

The event is intended to raise awareness of heart disease – the number one cause of death among American women – and to encourage the healthcare community and at-risk women to be aggressively proactive about early detection, diagnosis and treatment. Birmingham was selected to participate on the nationwide *Her Heart Community* tour because the heart disease risk factors and cardiac-related incidents for women in Alabama and Jefferson County are among the highest in the nation. Consider these recent findings from the Center for Health Statistics and the Alabama Department of Public Health:

- Alabama ranked No. 4 among all 50 states in terms of the number of women who died of heart disease per 100,000 population (237.4 versus a national average of 197.1)
- In Jefferson County, the overall death rate (men and women) was even higher – 370.4 per 100,000 population
- Alabama had the third highest incidence of female diabetes deaths in the country (30.4 compared to the national average of 23.0)

The November 2 public event will include a presentation by Birmingham resident Nichele Hoskins, a 39-year-old African American woman who has had two mild heart attacks. Ms. Hoskins is an advocate for the WomenHeart non-profit organization, which trains heart attack survivors to return to their local communities and help others better understand and embrace the importance of heart-healthy living habits.

Women and Heart Disease Fact Sheet

Terminology

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) – encompasses all diseases of the cardiovascular system, including coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, stroke, peripheral vascular disease, and others.
- Heart disease – encompasses diseases of the heart, including coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, rheumatic valvular disease, and others
- Coronary artery disease (CAD) – the condition in which the coronary arteries become narrowed or blocked as a result of arteriosclerosis, often involving angina and heart attack
- Coronary heart disease (CHD) – essentially synonymous with coronary artery disease

Gender differences

- Diagnosis of CHD in women using “traditional” ECG testing can be challenging¹
- Because women often present with heart attack symptoms not typically seen in men – usually called “atypical” in the literature – they may not get rapid, appropriate triage at the hospital²
- Following a heart attack, 38% of women die within one year, versus 25% of men³
- The increase in CHD risk for diabetic women is substantially greater than for diabetic men⁴

Prevalence and Lifetime Risk

- More than 8,000,000 American women live with heart disease⁵
- A woman’s lifetime risk of developing CHD after age 40 is about 32%⁶
- CVD ranks first among all disease categories in hospital discharges for women⁷

Death Rate

- CHD is the leading cause of death in women in the U.S.⁸
- In 2003, CHD caused the deaths of 483,842 women (39.7% of total deaths in women) compared with 267,902 caused by all forms of cancer (21.5% of total deaths in women)⁹
- The death rate from CHD is 25 – 50% higher for African-American women than white women in the U.S., and the death rate from heart attack is double¹⁰

Major Risk Factors

- Increasing age
- Smoking and second-hand smoke
- Lack of physical activity
- Diabetes
- Family history of heart disease
- High blood cholesterol
- Overweight or obesity

Contributing Factors

- Misperception that heart disease is a “man’s problem” can hinder effective diagnosis and treatment of CHD in women¹¹
- In a recent survey, almost all women said they were comfortable discussing preventive and treatment options with their doctors. However, only 38% of women reported that their doctors had ever discussed heart disease with them¹²
- Menopause – CHD rates in women after menopause are 2 – 3 times higher than those of women the same age before menopause¹³

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- ¹ Mieres JH, Shaw LJ, Hendel RC, et al. A report of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology Task Force on Women and Heart Disease (Writing Group on Perfusion Imaging in Women). *J Nucl Cardiol*. 2003;10:95-101.
- ² Wenger NK. Clinical characteristics of coronary heart disease in women: emphasis on gender differences. *Cardiovasc Res*. 2002;53:558-567.
- ³ American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2005 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2005.
- ⁴ Wenger NK. Clinical characteristics of coronary heart disease in women: emphasis on gender differences. *Cardiovasc Res*. 2002;53:558-567.
- ⁵ National Institutes of Health, *Healthy Heart Handbook for Women*, Bethesda, MD: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, July 1997. NIH publication 97-2720.
- ⁶ Lloyd-Jones DM, Leip EP, Larson MG, et al. Prediction of lifetime risk for cardiovascular disease by risk factor burden at 50 years of age. *Circulation*. 2006;113:791-798. Lloyd-Jones DM, Leip EP, Larson MG, et al. Prediction of lifetime risk for cardiovascular disease by risk factor burden at 50 years of age. *Circulation*. 2006;113:791-798.
- ⁷ American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2005 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2005.
- ⁸ American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2005 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2005.
- ⁹ American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2005 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2005.
- ¹⁰ Jha AK, Varosy PD, Kanaya AM, et al. Differences in medical care and disease outcomes among black and white women with heart disease. *Circulation*. 2003; 108: 1089-1094.
- ¹¹ Mieres JH, Shaw LJ, Hendel RC, et al. A report of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology Task Force on Women and Heart Disease (Writing Group on Perfusion Imaging in Women). *J Nucl Cardiol*. 2003;10:95-101.
- ¹² Mosca L, Ferris A, Fabunmi R, Robertson RM. Tracking women's awareness of heart disease: an American Heart Association national study. *Circulation*. 2004;109:573-579.
- ¹³ Kannel WB, Abbott RD. Incidence and prognosis of unrecognized myocardial infarction. An update on the Framingham Study. *N Engl J Med*. 1984;311:1144-1147.

“My message to women is to stay active, reduce stress and know the early signs of heart problems,” says Ms. Hoskins, a fitness instructor at the Shades Valley YMCA and senior editor for *Heart & Soul* magazine.

The keynote speaker on Day Two will be Dr. Jennifer Mieres, the Director of Cardiology for the New York University School of Medicine and a renowned national spokesperson for the American Heart Association (AHA). The producer of the documentary, “A Woman’s Heart,” Dr. Mieres was profiled as an “Everyday Hero” in *Newsday* for her tireless efforts in advocating that physicians and the general public become more knowledgeable, vigilant and proactive about addressing women-specific heart issues.

“We must dispel the myth that heart disease is a man’s disease,” said Dr. Mieres. “It is unconscionable, for example, that fewer than one in five physicians are aware that more women die of heart disease each year than men.”

Dr. Mieres also will discuss a recent AHA survey, which showed that, compared to white women, African-American women had a higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease and stroke, more than twice the prevalence of diabetes, and a disproportionate rate of obesity. Yet despite all these risks, most are not doing nearly enough to improve their health through physical activity.

Another prominent Day Two speaker will be Ami E. Iskandrian, M.D., F.A.C.P., F.A.C.C., a native of Baghdad, Iraq and the Director of Nuclear Cardiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The Speakers at the Day One event for physicians and health practitioners include Dr. on the first day include Leonard M. Fromer, MD, a past president of the California Academy of Family Physicians and an expert on health system reform.

Other topics to be covered in the *Her Heart Community* public event include:

- Why women are at higher risk and what they can do to minimize these risk factors
- The importance of using diagnostic imaging technologies, especially for the relatively high percentage of women who are unable to take the traditional treadmill stress test
- The differences in medical care and disease outcomes among black and white women

Her Heart Community (HHC) is a community-based initiative providing health professionals, patients, and consumers with the latest developments in raising awareness of the importance of changing the way we look at women and cardiovascular disease. For more information on this event, please contact Alexa Demopoulos at 312-423-4948.

EDITOR’S NOTE: *Both Ms. Hoskins and Dr. Mieres are available for interviews before and during the Birmingham event. For further information or to schedule an appointment, contact Phil Chang, 312-423-4924, pchang@hlbcomm.com.*



Heart Disease and Related Data, Alabama and Jefferson County

Heart Disease, Strokes and Diabetes Alabama Mortality, Prevalence Data

Alabama

Number of deaths due to heart disease per 100,000 population, 2003

Alabama: 281.7, 5th highest rate in the country
U.S: 232.3

Number of deaths due to heart disease per 100,000 population, 2003 – women

Alabama: 237.4, 4th highest in the country
U.S: 197.1

Number of stroke deaths per 100,000 population, 2003

Alabama: 65.1, 7th highest in the country
U.S: 53.5

Number of stroke deaths per 100,000 population, 2002 – women

Alabama: 67.0, 6th highest in the country
U.S: 55.2

Prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in the adult population, 2002

Alabama: 9.8%, tied with Mississippi for the highest rate in the country
U.S: 6.7%

Number of diabetes deaths per 100,000 population, 2002 – women

Alabama: 30.4, third highest in the country
U.S: 23.0

Comment: Alabamans are at high risk for contracting heart disease and related problems, and in general, are 20+% more likely to die from such diseases than their peers in other states.

Jefferson County

In 2004, there were 2,439 deaths due to CV disease, giving it a death rate of 370.4, (this cause rate is per 100,000 of the population)

National Spokesperson

Dr. Jennifer H. Mieres (Cardiologist) Director of Nuclear Cardiology

Jennifer H. Mieres, M.D., F.A.C.P., F.A.C.C, FAHA a native of Trinidad, West Indies, is an associate Professor and the Director of Nuclear Cardiology at New York University School of Medicine. She is a nationally recognized expert in cardiovascular diseases in women and is routinely called upon by the media to comment on heart health. She has appeared in national and local media outlets including two recent documentaries for PBS.

A graduate of Bennington College and Boston University School of Medicine, she is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association and is board certified in cardiovascular diseases and nuclear cardiology. Her society memberships also include The American Heart Association, The Society of Nuclear Medicine, the Association of Black Cardiologists and she is a founding member of The American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC).

As a member and Past President of the Board of Directors of the Long Island region of the American Heart Association, Dr. Mieres is actively involved in community service and has been a guest speaker at several community functions. She is actively involved in the American Heart Association's national women and heart disease campaign "Go Red For Women". She is a recipient of the 2002 New York State Governor's award for excellence and a recipient of the "Women Achievers Against the Odds" 2002 award from the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls. Dr. Mieres is a national spokesperson for the American Heart Association and is the chair of the Committee on Cardiac Imaging of the Council on Clinical Cardiology. She also serves on the Scientific Advisory Board for WomenHeart. Dr. Mieres was a producer of the PBS documentary *A Woman's Heart* which was nominated for an Emmy for best documentary in the health science category at the 46th Annual New York Emmy Awards held in March 2003. In August of 2003, Dr. Mieres was featured as an "Everyday Hero" in *Newsday*. In April 2004, Dr. Mieres was awarded the WomenHeart Wenger Award for Healthcare, and in May 2004, Dr. Mieres received the award for service in medicine from the Long Island Center for Business and Professional Women.

Secondary Spokespersons

Leonard Fromer, MD

Leonard Fromer is in private practice with Prairie Medical Group in Santa Monica, Calif.

Leonard M. Fromer, MD, received his medical degree magna cum laude from the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center. He completed his residency in Family Medicine at the University of California at Irvine, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Family Physicians, and a diplomate of both the American Board of Family Practice and the National Board of Medical Examiners. He has been in private practice in Santa Monica, California, with Prairie Medical Group, for 25 years. Dr. Fromer has served on the group's Board of Directors and has been its Managing Director as well as its Chief Financial Officer.

His practice includes a second field of concentration in allergy and asthma. Dr. Fromer sits on the California Department of Health Services IMAP Advisory Panel for Allergy and Asthma, and he is on the faculty of the Department of Family Medicine at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Dr. Fromer currently serves on the International Editorial Board of the International Primary Care Respiratory Journal. He is a past president of the California Academy of Family Physicians and has served over ten years as a member and Chairman of the American Academy of Family Physicians Commission on Health Care Services. He currently sits of the AAFP Commission on Quality. He has also served on the Physicians Capital Source Project Steering Committee for the American Medical Association, the Advisory Board of Directors for the American Medical Informatics Association, and the Advisory Board for the World Foundation for Studies of Female Health. Dr. Fromer has lectured extensively on health-system reform, and has been featured on CBS News, ABC News, and in the Wall Street Journal.

Stephen Brunton, MD

Stephen A. Brunton, MD , Director of Faculty Development, Cabarrus Family Medicine Residency, Charlotte, North Carolina

Stephen A. Brunton, MD earned his medical degree from Monash University Medical School in Melbourne, Australia. He then completed his residency in family practice at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center in Long Beach, California. During the early 1980s, Dr. Brunton served as Director of Education for the American Academy of Family Physicians before returning to Long Beach as Director of the Family Practice Residency Program until mid-1998.

Dr. Brunton is a former president of both the California Academy of Family Physicians and the Association of Family Practice Residency Directors. He is a board-certified family physician, with a certificate of added qualifications in geriatrics. He has published numerous articles, medical textbook chapters, and monographs on clinical topics related to family medicine. He is *Editor of Internal Medicine Alert* and serves on the editorial boards of such journals as *Primary Care Special Edition*, *Family Practice Recertification*, and *Journal of Clinical Hypertension*.

Birmingham Spokesperson

Ami E. Iskandrian, M.D.
Director of Nuclear Cardiology

Ami E. Iskandrian, M.D., F.A.C.P., F.A.C.C., a native of Baghdad, Iraq, is the Distinguished Professor of Medicine and Radiology, and the Director of Nuclear Cardiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He is a respected teacher and researcher in the field of cardiovascular disease, and has received several awards as a professor and a clinician.

A graduate of the University of Baghdad Medical School, he is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, and is board certified in cardiovascular diseases and nuclear cardiology. His society memberships also include the Society of Nuclear Medicine, the Association of University Cardiologists, and the American Federation for Clinical Research.

Dr. Iskandrian relocated to the United States in 1971 where he completed his residency in medicine and a fellowship in cardiology at the Hahnemann University Hospital in Philadelphia, Penn. He went on to serve in several faculty positions including the Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and as the Endowed Chair, William Penn Snyder III Professor of Medicine and Director, Cardiovascular Research Center of the Medical College of Pennsylvania/Hahnemann University Hospital.

Since joining the faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 1999, Dr. Iskandrian has been recognized with the Department of Medicine's "Top Ten Teacher Award for Excellence in Teaching" three times, as well as earning the Distinguished Teaching Award from the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Cardiology. He has also been selected as one of America's Best Doctors in several publications, including *Birmingham Magazine*, the Birmingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, in 2005 – 2006.

Dr. Iskandrian currently serves as the Chair of the American College of Cardiology's Cardiac Imaging Committee and as Chair of the Scientific Committee of the Alabama Chapter of the American College of Cardiology. He also holds several editorial positions, including the *American Journal of Cardiology*, *American Journal of Noninvasive Cardiology*, *Journal of Nuclear Cardiology*, *Journal of Nuclear Medicine* and serves on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Birmingham Patient Advocate/Heart Attack Survivor

Nichele Hoskins

Senior Editor, *Heart & Soul* magazine

You might think a 36-year-old woman who taught exercise classes and edited fitness articles for national health magazines wouldn't have to worry about life-threatening cardiac problems. But as Birmingham's Nichele Hoskins discovered in 2003, no one is bulletproof when it comes to heart attacks.

Hoskins, former fitness editor of Birmingham-based health magazine, suffered two mild attacks in a matter of months, and twice had three stents inserted in her coronary arteries to open blocked blood vessels. After battling depression and gaining weight, she has bounced back with vigor, attitude and the hope that sharing her story with women will encourage them to actively lower their risks of heart disease.

"My message is to stay active, reduce stress and know the early signs of heart problems," she says.

Today, Hoskins, 39, is fitness editor for Baltimore-based *Heart & Soul* magazine, which covers health, fitness, beauty and spiritual concerns of African-American women, and teaches a spinning class at the Birmingham YMCA. She also is a patient advocate/spokeswoman for WomenHeart, a Washington DC-based non-profit organization dedicated to spreading the message that heart disease is the number one killer of women and promoting its early detection, accurate diagnosis and proper treatment.

In 2004 Hoskins was among a select group of women invited to participate in the organization's annual Science and Leadership Symposium at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, where she received extensive training to prepare her for community service. Her story has been featured in *Portico*, *Heart & Soul*, and *Odyssey Couleur* magazines, and was in *Roll Call* and *Congressional Quarterly* as part of a 2004 ad campaign by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

She will share her experiences and offer practical tips at the *Her Heart Community* educational conference in Birmingham at The Summit Club, 1901 6th Avenue North, Suite 3100 on November 2. In addition, Hoskins can provide unique, first-person insights into how and why heart attacks are different for women (for example, many have onset symptoms other than the classic chest pains) and how she found the confidence to exercise again.

Editor's Note: To arrange an interview with Hoskins or attend the conference, contact Philip Chang, 312/423-4924, pchang@hlbcomm.com. She also has begun teaching a Tuesday 5:30 p.m. Spinning class at the Shades Valley YMCA and may be available for interviews/photos there.