

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Media Contact:**

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### ***HER HEART COMMUNITY, A NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH EDUCATION INITIATIVE, COMES TO LOS ANGELES ON JANUARY 19***

***40% of Los Angeles County Deaths Result From Cardiovascular Disease<sup>1</sup>***

***Event Will Include Local Heart Attack Survivor Irene Churchward and Nationally Renowned Heart Health Expert/Documentary Producer Dr. Jennifer Mieres***

- WHAT:** A heart-healthy educational program to increase awareness among Los Angeles women of the importance of early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease. ***National expert Dr. Jennifer Mieres and local heart attack survivor Irene Churchward will share their lessons and experience, delivering potentially life-saving information to local women.***
- WHY:** Coronary heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States,<sup>2</sup> and about two-thirds (4 million) of Los Angeles County residents are at risk for developing heart disease.<sup>3</sup> In addition, women have a special need to become better informed about heart disease, largely because its onset, progression, and symptoms can be different for women than for men. For example, *women should be more aware that their major symptoms prior to a heart attack may not include chest pain but may include unusual fatigue, shortness of breath, or indigestion.*
- WHO:** More than 100 patients have been invited to learn from Dr. Mieres, Ms. Churchward, and others about how to recognize, prevent, and test for heart disease. They also will be encouraged to join *Her Heart Community*, a unique resource for women and physicians that already has more than 1700 members. Dr. Mieres is a national spokesperson for the American Heart Association. Ms. Churchward is a member of the WomenHeart nonprofit organization, which includes a program that trains heart attack survivors to help others in their local communities.
- WHERE:** The Proud Bird, 11022 Aviation Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045
- WHEN:** January 19, 11:45 AM – 1:00 PM
- HOW:** The public can register for the event by calling (888) 541-9160 and the media is also invited to attend. Please help local women by informing your audience about this program. Both Dr. Mieres and Ms. Churchward are available for interviews prior to and during the event. For the Spanish language media, Ms. Churchward can do interviews in Spanish.

*Her Heart Community* is an educational program supported by Astellas Pharma US, Inc.

1. *Premature Deaths From Heart Disease and Stroke in Los Angeles County: a Cities and Communities Health Report*. County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services, Office of Health Assessment & Epidemiology. January 2006. 2. American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2006 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association, 2006. 3. Health Services Los Angeles County. *Health officials promote heart health month with the introduction of Prevention Matters! to encourage women's heart health* [press release]. February 8, 2005.

## NEWS RELEASE

**Contact:** Philip Chang  
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### ***Her Heart Community Comes to Los Angeles County, Where About 40% of Deaths Are Caused by Heart Disease and Stroke***

*Whittier resident and heart attack survivor Irene Churchward will share her inspiring story to help other women 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.*

**Los Angeles, January XX, 2007**—The *Her Heart Community* initiative, a two-day educational conference featuring the latest information on the risks, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease in women, will be held in Los Angeles on January 18 -19. The first day at Le Meridien at Beverly Hills, 6:30 - 8:30 PM is exclusively for physicians and other health practitioners, while the second day at The Proud Bird, 11:45 – 1:00 PM 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. Los Angeles was selected to participate in the nationwide *Her Heart Community* tour because 40% of deaths in the county are caused by cardiovascular disease.<sup>1</sup>

Women have a special need to become better informed about heart disease, largely because its onset, progression, and symptoms can be different for women than for men. For example, in one study, fewer than 30% of women reported having chest pain or discomfort prior to their heart attacks, and 43% reported have no chest pain during any phase of the attack. Instead, major symptoms included unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath, and indigestion.<sup>2</sup>

The January 18 public event will include a presentation by Irene Churchward, a Whittier (CA) resident who did not recognize her symptoms when she had a heart attack in 2004. Ms. Churchward is an advocate for the WomenHeart nonprofit 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 know all about breast cancer, but most are surprised to learn that heart disease kills more women than all cancers combined,” says Ms. Churchward, the Executive Director of SPIRITT, a nonprofit that serves multicultural communities in and around Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, La Puente, El Monte, and Glendora. “Women need to become more aware of heart attack warning signs and take them seriously.”

The keynote speaker on Days 1 and 2 will be Dr. Jennifer Mieres, Director of Nuclear 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, that fewer than 1 in 5 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 women are not doing nearly enough to improve their health through physical activity.

Another prominent Day 1 speaker will be Jamshid Maddahi, MD, former chairman of the American Heart Association Council on Cardiac Imaging and Professor of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology and Radiological Sciences at the UCLA School of Medicine. An additional distinguished speaker at the Day 1 event, for physicians and health practitioners, will be Len Fromer, MD, 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:

- Cardiac risk factors for women and what they can do to minimize them.
- Differences in coronary artery disease among different ethnic groups.

*Her Heart Community (HHC)* is a community-based initiative supported by Astellas Pharma US, Inc., 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 about *Her Heart Community*, please visit [www.herheartcommunity.com](http://www.herheartcommunity.com).

#### *About Astellas*

Astellas Pharma US, Inc., located in Deerfield, Illinois, is a US affiliate of Tokyo-based Astellas Pharma Inc. Astellas is a pharmaceutical company dedicated to improving the health of people around the world through the provision of innovative and reliable pharmaceutical products. The organization is committed to becoming a global pharmaceutical company by combining outstanding R&D and marketing capabilities and continuing to grow in the world pharmaceutical market. For more information about Astellas Pharma US, Inc., please visit our website at [www.astellas.com/us](http://www.astellas.com/us).

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** *Both Ms. Churchward and Dr. Mieres are available for interviews before and during the Los Angeles event. For the Spanish-language media, Ms. Churchward can do interviews in Spanish. For further information or to schedule an appointment, contact Phil Chang, 312-423-4924, [pchang@hlbcomm.com](mailto:pchang@hlbcomm.com).*

1. *Premature Deaths From Heart Disease and Stroke in Los Angeles County: a Cities and Communities Health Report.* County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services, Office of Health Assessment & Epidemiology. January 2006. 2. McSweeney JC, Cody M, O’Sullivan P, et al. Women’s early warning symptoms of acute myocardial infarction. *Circulation.* 2003;108:2619-2623.



## 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 atherosclerosis, often involving angina and heart attack
- Coronary heart disease (CHD) – essentially synonymous with coronary artery disease

### Gender differences

- ECG testing may have reduced sensitivity and specificity for diagnosing CHD in women as compared to men<sup>1</sup>
- 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 hospital<sup>2</sup>
- Following a heart attack, 38% of women die within 1 year, versus 25% of men<sup>3</sup>
- The increase in CHD risk for diabetic women is substantially greater than for diabetic men<sup>2</sup>

### Prevalence and Lifetime Risk

- 6,000,000 American women live with heart disease<sup>4</sup>
- CVD ranks first among all disease categories in hospital discharges for women<sup>3</sup>

### Death Rate

- CHD is the leading cause of death in women in the US<sup>4</sup>
- In 2003, CVD caused the deaths of 483,842 women compared with 267,902 caused by all forms of cancer<sup>3</sup>
- The death rate from CHD is 25% to 50% higher for African American women than white women in the US, and the death rate from heart attack is double<sup>2</sup>

### Major Risk Factors

- Increasing age
- Smoking and secondhand 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 women<sup>1</sup>
- 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 them<sup>5</sup>
- Menopause – CHD rates in women after menopause are 2 to 3 times higher than those of women the same age before menopause<sup>4</sup>

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. *Facts About Women and Cardiovascular Disease*. Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2876>. Accessed October 9, 2006. 4. American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2006 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2006. 5. 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.

## Understanding Cardiovascular Risk in Women

<b>Menopause:</b>	Loss of estrogen during and after menopause may contribute to a higher risk of coronary artery disease (CAD). <sup>1</sup>
<b>Age:</b>	Women present with CAD 10 years later in life than men. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Physical Inactivity:</b>	Physically active women have lower coronary heart disease rates than inactive women. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Cholesterol Level:</b>	Hypercholesterolemia is more common in women than in men. <sup>4</sup>
<b>Blood Pressure:</b>	Certain birth control pills can increase the risk of high blood pressure. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Diabetes:</b>	Diabetes increases CAD risk 3 to 7 times in women compared with 2 to 3 times in men. <sup>5</sup>
<b>Smoking and Birth Control Pills:</b>	The combination of smoking and oral contraceptives increases the risk of stroke. <sup>1</sup>

### Women's Heart Resources

#### **American Heart Association**

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

The American Heart Association site contains information about specific conditions, lifestyle improvement and scientific conferences.

#### **Other Cardiovascular Health Information Sites on the Internet**

##### **US Government Sites**

- [Healthfinder.gov](http://Healthfinder.gov)
- National Library of Medicine includes PubMed and MedlinePlus

##### **Associations and Societies**

- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Physicians
- American Red Cross

##### **Patient Information**

- [WebMD.com](http://WebMD.com)
- [womenshealth.gov](http://womenshealth.gov)
- [amwa-doc.org](http://amwa-doc.org)

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1. American Heart Association. *Heart and Stroke Facts*. Dallas, TX: American Heart Association; 2003. 2. Wenger NK. Clinical characteristics of coronary heart disease in women: emphasis on gender differences. *Cardiovasc Res*. 2002;53:558-567. 3. Lee I-M, Rexrode KM, Cook NR, Manson JE, Buring JE. Physical activity and coronary heart disease in women: is "no pain, no gain" passé? *JAMA*. 2001;285:1447-1454. 4. American Heart Association. *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2005 Update*. Dallas, Tex: American Heart Association; 2005. 5. Manson JE, Spelsberg A. Risk modification in the diabetic patient. In: Manson JE, Ridker PM, Gaziano JM, Hennekens CH, eds. *Prevention of Myocardial Infarction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 1996:241-273.

## Heart Disease and Stroke: California Mortality, Prevalence Data

### California

- Heart disease is the number one cause of death for both men and women in the United States and in California.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2004, 65,002 California residents died from heart disease.<sup>1</sup>
- African Americans had the highest age-adjusted heart disease death rate among Californian racial/ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup>

### California Compared With the US

- In 2004, the overall age-adjusted death rate from heart disease in California was 190.3 per 100,000 population, compared with 217.5 per 100,000 for the US.<sup>1</sup>

### Los Angeles County

- Approximately 40% of all deaths in Los Angeles County are caused by cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup>
- Los Angeles County had the highest average number of heart disease deaths (18,776.3) compared with other California counties during 2002-2004.<sup>1</sup>
- During 2002-2004, the crude heart disease death rate for Los Angeles County was 186.9 per 100,000 population.<sup>3</sup>
- According to Jonathan Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health, heart disease is responsible for 1 in every 3 deaths in Los Angeles County.<sup>4</sup>

1. Cox DH. *Heart Disease Deaths in California, 2004*. Sacramento, Calif: Center for Health Statistics, California Department of Health Services; December 2005. 2. *Premature Deaths From Heart Disease and Stroke in Los Angeles County: a Cities and Communities Health Report*. County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services, Office of Health Assessment & Epidemiology. January 2006. 3. *Health Data Summaries for California Counties 2006*. Sacramento, Calif: Center for Health Statistics, California Department of Health Services. 4. Health Services Los Angeles County. *Health official promote heart health month with the introduction of Prevention Matters! to encourage women's heart health* [press release]. February 8, 2005.

## **National Spokesperson**

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

Jennifer H. Mieres, MD, FACP, FACC, FAHA, a native of Trinidad, West Indies, is 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 2 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 she is board certified in cardiovascular diseases and nuclear cardiology. Her society memberships include the American Heart Association, the Society of Nuclear Medicine, and the Association of Black Cardiologists. 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 Spokesperson**

### **Len Fromer, MD, FAAFP**

**Len Fromer is Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Medicine,  
UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles, California**

Len Fromer, MD, FAACP, 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 10 years as a member and Chairman of the American Academy of Family Physicians Commission on Health Care Services. He currently sits on 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*.

## **Los Angeles Patient Advocate/Heart Attack Survivor**

### **Irene Redondo Churchward**

Executive Director, SPIRITT Family Services

Strong and nurturing, Irene Redondo Churchward is the prototypical woman caregiver. Her children and husband always come first, and she devotes her professional life to helping of the less fortunate in the East Los Angeles area. So when she began having trouble breathing and coughing three years ago, her problems were low on her list of priorities.

“It was early December, and it’s not unusual for me to crash that time of year,” says Churchward, the Executive Director of SPIRITT, a non-profit that serves multicultural communities in and around Whittier, Santa Fe Springs, La Puente, El Monte and Glendora. “I saw a physician’s assistant, who said my lungs were a little congested and gave me some medications. Even when I had to sit down while shopping in the stores, I thought I would be fine once I got some rest after Christmas.”

Her condition, however, did not improve, and she saw another doctor just before Martin Luther King Day. This physician attributed her ill health to the medications and wrote a new prescription. A few days later, Churchward was lying on her bathroom floor in a cold sweat, arising only to vomit several times. Still, she went to work the next day. But after experiencing severe chest pain that evening, she finally went to the hospital, where an angiogram showed that 90 percent of one artery and 70 percent of the other were blocked.

Churchward is among the tens of thousands of women each year who are unaware that certain symptoms -- including unusual fatigue, sleep disturbance, shortness of breath and indigestion – are precursors of heart attacks. What’s worse, in many of those cases – including Churchward’s – their physicians also lack this knowledge because these symptoms common in women are considered “atypical” in most medical textbooks.

“Looking back, I can’t believe how ignorant I was about issues relating to the health of the heart,” says Churchward. “Women need to be aware of heart attack warning signs and take them seriously. We need to change the perception that this disease only affects older men, because heart attacks kill more women than all types of cancers combined.”

Churchward, 64, has learned from her mistakes. When she began having breathing and vomiting problems a few months ago, she didn’t hesitate to go see her doctor. Fortunately, she was able to take a pharmacological stress test (instead of the conventional walking or running on a treadmill), which indicated no heart problems.

“I’m lucky to be alive, and I realize it’s up to me to take control of my health,” she says.

Churchward is spreading this message to others as a patient advocate/spokeswoman for WomenHeart, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the early detection, accurate diagnosis, and proper treatment of heart disease. This past fall she was among a select group of women invited to participate in the organization's annual Science and Leadership Symposium at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where she received extensive training to prepare her for community service.

She will share her experiences and offer practical tips at the *Her Heart Community* educational conference in Los Angeles at (The Proud Bird, 11022 Aviation Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90045) on January 19, 2007. In addition, Churchward can provide unique, first-person insights into how and why heart attacks are different for women, and the cultural challenges of getting Hispanic women in Los Angeles County to change their attitudes and behaviors about their own health. For example, many are unaware that their problems with obesity and diabetes increase their risks of heart disease and would prefer to try home remedies rather than see a physician.

**Editor's Note:** To arrange an interview with Churchward or attend the conference, contact Philip Chang, 312-423-4924, [pchang@hlbcomm.com](mailto:pchang@hlbcomm.com). For the Hispanic media, she can do her interviews in Spanish.

