



**Contacts: Chad Lawson,
Public Relations
Spartanburg Regional
(864) 641-9530**

**Spirit of Women HeartCaring Case Study
Improving Employee Health - A Heart to Heart Opportunity
Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, Spartanburg, SC**

Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System utilized HeartCaring, a national heart health education and resource program administered by the Spirit of Women Hospital Network, to begin reducing the comparatively high rate of heart disease deaths in their region and significantly enhance Healthcare System employees' heart health.

What is HeartCaringSM?

HeartCaringSM is a national certification program by Spirit of Women indicating excellence in gender-sensitive cardiovascular care. The program supports hospitals to improve heart health in their community while successfully integrating hospital and physician clinical and outreach initiatives.

HeartCaringSM involves a three-prong approach to planning and implementation that includes hospitals, clinicians, consumers, government agencies and corporate partners in an effort to increase awareness and reduce cardiovascular disease in women. The growing body of research reveals an under-diagnosis of heart disease in women as well as variations in clinical indicators, symptoms, and treatment regimens, underscoring the need for a gender-sensitive approach to cardiovascular medicine. HeartCaringSM offers professional education and outreach, clinical excellence and consumer education – all in an effort to facilitate action around the identification and treatment of heart disease and peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) in women.

HeartCaring partnerships include the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: the Heart Truth campaign, the Peripheral Arterial Disease Coalition, the American Vascular Association, Legs for Life, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: Stay in Circulation campaign.

Heart disease continues to be the number one cause of death among women, yet studies demonstrate that women do not prioritize heart disease as a health risk for themselves. Indeed, many clinicians still do not recognize heart disease as the leading cause of death in women and there continues to be differences in the way women and men are evaluated and treated for heart disease, even with the same symptoms. Women also tend to present with non-classic heart disease symptoms that frequently go unrecognized by healthcare

providers. Medical professionals and women need to become more aware of the signs and symptoms of cardiovascular disease and to take action for improved health.

Employee Health - A Heart to Heart Opportunity: Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, Spartanburg, SC

Problem/Challenge:

As a healthcare leader in their region and community, administration and employees of Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System became determined to help reduce the comparatively high rate of deaths from heart disease in their region (556 per 100,000 vs. 536 per 100,000 nationwide). In addition, the hospital faced the realization that their own employees were among those disproportionately impacted by heart disease.

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of heart disease prevalence among women.
- Help employees determine their own risks for heart disease. More than 80 percent of Spartanburg Regional Medical Center's 5,000 employees are female, the hospital focused on this group.
- Assist employees in reducing controllable heart disease risk factors, such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, tobacco use, physical inactivity, obesity, and diabetes.
- Provide tools for professional employees to help their patients be Heart Smart.

Approach:

From March through December 2006, Spartanburg Regional Medical Center implemented the HeartCaring program in their facility and successfully certified 5 primary care practices as HeartCaring providers, including three OB/GYN groups, one Family Medicine group, Spartanburg Regional Medical Center (SRMC) Employee Health Department and all of the medical residents that rotated through the Chest Pain Center. Participating physician office personnel, residents and SRMC Employee Health Department staff were trained on gender differences in heart disease, current best practices, and evidence-based research.

The physician practices and the SRMC Employee Health Department utilized HeartCaring patient education materials, including "Health is Action" handouts addressing blood pressure control, weight loss, common diagnostic tests to detect heart disease, heart healthy diet tips, and information for patients on understanding screening results. Other newsletters and brochures distributed to Spartanburg Regional Medical Center employees included information about ethnic differences in heart disease, understanding cholesterol values, and P.A.D. In addition, practitioners used the Framingham Score Tool at routine annual Employee Health visits to better assess risk for developing heart disease.

To formally launch the employee initiative and engage employees in the program, Spartanburg Regional Medical Center Administration created a Wellness Challenge to encourage employees to become heart healthy. In October employees participated in Spirit of Women's "Walk with Spirit" program, an internet-based national walking club. The hospital provided free t-shirts for the Walk with Spirit participants who completed a mile on the indoor walking track. During Heart Month in February, staff participated in Go Red Day and a Red Dress Fashion Show featuring "surprise guests" (senior level administrators) who modeled red clothing. Finally, the hospital made valuable heart health screenings available free of charge to community members at their Cardiac Rehabilitation Services, including ABI, weight, blood pressure, glucose checks, BMI and lipid profile, that were reviewed with the patient by a nurse practitioner.

Hospital administration also promoted employee participation in the Greater Spartanburg Shrinkdown Program, a statewide initiative that is a free, 10-week healthy living program targeting youth and adult obesity and provides a healthy living guide, weekly weigh-ins and counseling, and "Health Talks" sessions.

Results:

- A total of 3,797 female employees obtained health screenings, blood draws, and heart health counseling at their annual physical through the Employee Health Department. The Employee Health Department had a total of 23,737 employee visits and HeartCaring educational materials were strategically located for access to all employees who visited the Employee Health Department throughout the year. Community screenings resulted in 2580 blood pressure screenings and 850 cholesterol screenings. Of the 218 Walk With Spirit program participants, 116 were Spartanburg Regional Medical Center employees. The 733 employees participating in the Shrinkdown program lost a total of 1,759 pounds. Statewide, 27,361 people lost a total of 82,641 pounds (8,495 of those were lost by Spartanburg county residents).
- In February alone, 500 employees had their blood pressure screened (50 percent had elevated systolic blood pressure and were instructed to see their primary care physician for treatment).
- The HeartCaring certified primary care providers delivered positive heart health messages to 15,360 patients in 2006 through individual office visits.
- Over 60,000 patient education materials were delivered directly to patients through the primary care physician offices and SRMC's Employee Health Department.

Evaluation:

- Increasing awareness of heart disease among 5,000 Spartanburg Regional Medical Center employees has a direct impact on community health. Employees who experienced the HeartCaring program first-hand and took positive action to improve their own heart health were enabled to effectively pass on the critical health messages to family and friends. Professional employees who work in clinical areas were enabled to pass on heart health information to their patients.
- Physician practice staff and employees enthusiastically embraced HeartCaring and surprised organizers by repeatedly requesting information for themselves and their families.
- Employees rallied around the topic of heart health after experiencing the sudden death of an esteemed female colleague from unidentified heart disease. HeartCaring provided positive, achievable action steps that employees could work toward during their grief.
- Participation in the HeartCaring program resulted in unprecedented collaboration among various service lines in the hospital for special heart health events including Day of Dance, Red Shoe Luncheon, and the Women's Expo, directly reaching 708 community members.