

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**National HeartCaring Program
to Improve Cardiovascular Care in the U.S.**

HeartCaring designates hospitals and physicians in gender-sensitive cardiovascular practice and educates patients to recognize unique causes and symptoms of cardiovascular disease in women.

The national HeartCaring® program is powered by Spirit Health Group® and activated by U.S. hospitals that ascribe to the highest standards of excellence in women's health, education, and community outreach. HeartCaring is sponsored in part by The Bristol-Myers Squibb/Sanofi Pharmaceuticals Partnership, with educational support from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) *The Heart Truth*, the Vascular Disease Foundation, the Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) Coalition, and the Venous Disease Coalition.

Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of death in the United States. HeartCaring, now in its 5th year, was created to proactively address the growing body of research that demonstrates an under-diagnosis of cardiovascular disease in women. Despite treatment and diagnostic advances, there is a need for healthcare systems and clinicians to better understand gender variations in symptoms of cardiovascular diseases and conditions such as peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) and stroke. HeartCaring addresses these gaps by providing clinician education and opportunities for women to take action on their health.

"While we've known for some time that heart disease is the leading cause of death of women in this country, it's only recently that we've begun to understand what we can do to better prevent and treat cardiovascular disease in women," said Tanya Abreu, National Program Director of HeartCaring and President of Spirit Health Group. "Designated HeartCaring hospitals and physicians are demonstrating commitment to gender-sensitive cardiovascular care and education and helping women take action to reduce their personal risks for cardiovascular disease."

The HeartCaring program byline, "*Your Heart is in Your Hands*", reflects the united front of hospitals, primary care physicians, cardiologists and consumers working together to prevent cardiovascular diseases and conditions. HeartCaring hospitals directly invite primary care physicians into a formal collaboration to heighten prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cardiovascular disease in women. The more than 600 actively participating HeartCaring physicians have committed to receive gender-sensitive education about symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of cardiovascular disease, P.A.D., and stroke in women. They in turn provide patients with educational tools, such as an interactive workbook, encouraging women patients to make positive, healthy choices to prevent cardiovascular disease. Each year HeartCaring Hospital/Health Systems distribute more than 700,000 materials nationwide.

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For more information about HeartCaring, visit www.heartcaring.com.

About Spirit Health Group

Spirit Health Group[®] moves its targeted audiences, particularly women, to take action for their health. Through its hospital members across the United States, Spirit Health Group delivers effective health messaging. Spirit motivates women to take action for their health and the health of their families by delivering credible messages within a trusted healthcare environment. Spirit Health Group combines the strengths of the Spirit of Women Hospital Network[®] with Spirit Health Media[®] and Spirit Health Partnerships[®] to accomplish these objectives.

About the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, and blood; blood resources; and sleep disorders. The Institute plans, conducts, fosters, and supports an integrated and coordinated program of basic research, clinical investigations and trials, observational studies, and demonstration and education projects. NHLBI is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Federal Government's primary agency for biomedical and behavioral research. NIH is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NHLBI press releases and fact sheets can be found online at www.nhlbi.nih.gov

The Heart Truth is a national awareness campaign on women and heart disease sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). *The Heart Truth* introduced the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness in 2003. *The Heart Truth* has been a supporting partner to HeartCaring since 2005.

sanofi-aventis

Sanofi-aventis is the world's third largest pharmaceutical company, ranking number one in Europe. Backed by a world-class R&D organization, sanofi-aventis is developing leading positions in seven major therapeutic areas: cardiovascular, thrombosis, oncology, metabolic diseases, central nervous system, internal medicine, and vaccines. Sanofi-aventis is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).

Bristol-Myers Squibb

Bristol-Myers Squibb is a global pharmaceutical and related health care products company whose mission is to extend and enhance human life.

The Vascular Disease Foundation

Established in 1998, the Vascular Disease Foundation (VDF) is the *only* multidisciplinary national public 501(c)(3) non-profit organization focused on vascular diseases with the sole purpose of providing public education and improving awareness about vascular diseases. The mission of the VDF is to improve health for all by reducing death and disability from vascular disease.

Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) Coalition

The Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.) Coalition is an alliance of leading health organizations, vascular health professional societies, and government agencies that have united to raise public and health professional awareness about lower extremity P.A.D.

The Venous Disease Coalition

The Venous Disease Coalition (VDC) is a collaborative network of professional and public organizations united by one mission to increase public and health professional awareness of venous disease. The VDC is a public and interdisciplinary consortium dedicated to promoting public and health professional awareness of venous disease. The Coalition provides opportunities for members of the public, health care professionals, clinician investigators and basic researchers, professional health societies, government and health policy agencies, and other public and private organizations to work collaboratively to improve public health by providing educational programs regarding venous disease.

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