



## Getting to the Heart of the Matter

Each year, more women die from heart disease than from breast, ovarian and uterine cancer combined. In Georgia, women die at a rate of 387/100,000 – 9 percent higher than the national average. To increase awareness surrounding the risk and other facts about the disease, every February is recognized as National Heart Month.

National health observances such as these serve as an opportunity for public health and medical professionals, consumer groups and others to educate the public about health risks through health promotion events and campaigns; and share new research, information and resources.

With this two-pronged approach, there lies the potential to educate, motivate and mobilize people to take advantage of local resources and research to help them lead healthier lives.

### Promoting Heart Health

Raising awareness of heart disease is part of Morehouse School of Medicine's commitment to having a positive impact on the community, particularly among vulnerable populations. Its Women With Heart Initiative educates Georgians about heart health risks and prevention tips for African-American women through a scholarship fund, fundraiser and marketing program.

The initiative kicked off in conjunction with National Heart Month and events included health screenings and personal testimonies of heart disease survivors.

"Morehouse School of Medicine is committed to discovering the cause and cure of health inequities such as heart disease," said Dr. Valerie Montgomery Rice, dean and executive vice president. "We train primary care physicians to not only understand the biological determinants of illness and health, but also the social, and this will make a difference in the heart health of the nation."

Women With Heart also partnered with The Heart Truth to create a national movement aimed at delivering an urgent wake-up call to women about heart disease. The Heart Truth campaign sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute is vital to giving women life-saving messages about their risk for heart disease and how to lower it.

It's through events, community partnerships and concerted efforts like these that the message of improving health and wellbeing can reach a wide audience. Awareness extends beyond advertising or marketing as it equips people with the knowledge and tools to take action.



Dr. Elizabeth Ofili

### Preventing Heart Disease with Research

Research plays a critical role in understanding preventative measures, especially when identifying the cause of health disparities. For example, African-American women are at greater risk for heart disease than any other ethnic group. Morehouse School of Medicine focuses its research on diseases, such as cardio metabolic diseases, that disproportionately affect minority communities.

Over the past 15 years, as a member of the faculty at Morehouse School of Medicine, Dr. Elizabeth Ofili has established partnerships with community physicians in primary and specialty care, to improve the quality of care that is delivered to underserved patients.

"In my practice at Morehouse School of Medicine, I see minority and predominantly African American patients with considerable risk factors for heart disease," says Dr. Ofili. "My practice, research, and teaching are an opportunity to make a difference in the burden of heart disease among African Americans."

In recent research published by Dr. Ofili a clinical trial showed comparable blood pressure (BP) lowering by valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide and amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide in obese hypertensive patients. Relative to amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide, valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide reduced the hyperglycemic response to glucose challenge. An objective of this post hoc analysis was to determine whether this benefit extended to African Americans and whites.

In this particular clinical trial, treatments reduced clinic BP from baseline to all visits (< 0.0001), regardless of race/ethnicity (126 African Americans, 212 whites). In African Americans, there were no significant between-treatment differences in clinic or ambulatory BP lowering at weeks 8 or 16. Whites responded better to valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide. In both racial/ethnic subgroups, the addition of valsartan but not amlodipine mitigated the hyperglycemic response to hydrochlorothiazide through enhanced insulin secretion. Valsartan/hydrochlorothiazide was as effective as amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide was in reducing BP in obese, hypertensive African Americans and better than amlodipine/hydrochlorothiazide in whites.

Both the promotional and research aspects of Morehouse School of Medicine's approach to heart disease are examples of how it fulfills its mission of addressing primary healthcare needs through programs in education, research and service with emphasis on people of color.

## DATEBOOK

E-mail your upcoming events  
to [judy@hospitalnews.org](mailto:judy@hospitalnews.org)

### Upcoming Programs From the Society for Healthcare Strategy & Market Development (SHSMD) of the American Hospital Association

SHSMD educational programs are designed to meet the unique professional development needs of healthcare marketing, PR and communications, strategic planning, and physician strategies professionals. Visit [www.shsmd.org](http://www.shsmd.org) for a look at the upcoming schedule of events:

April 19–20, 2012 - Face to Face Program, Executive Dialogue for Strategy Professionals

For more information on these and other SHSMD educational opportunities, call (312) 422-3888 or send an e-mail to [shsmd@aha.org](mailto:shsmd@aha.org).

### April 14 Winship Gala 2012

Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University presents the Winship Gala 2012 on Saturday, April 14 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Piedmont Driving Club, Atlanta. This event will celebrate the HOPE that critical research provides to patients treated at Winship, the only NCI-designated cancer center in Georgia.

### April 21 Sprint for Cancer

Grab your families, friends and coworkers, lace up your shoes and come join us for the 10th annual NCR Sprint for Cancer road race, benefiting Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The event will be held Saturday, April 21 at 8 a.m. at Perimeter Place Shopping Center, Target parking lot. There will be 5K, 10K and Fun Run races perfect for walkers and runners of all ages and abilities. For more information, e-mail [sprintforcancer@radiantsystems.com](mailto:sprintforcancer@radiantsystems.com) or call (770) 576-7060.

### May 5 Derby Day

The 6th annual Derby Day, hosted by Johns Creek FRIENDS to benefit Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, will be held Saturday, May 5 from 4:30 - 8:30 p.m. This year's event will take place at The Country Club of the South in Johns Creek. The 138th Kentucky Derby will be the focal point of the day with "horse voting" booths, an extensive silent auction, authentic Derby-style food and beverages, entertainment and large screen televisions to view "The Most Exciting Two Minutes in Sports." For more information, contact Lynn Leslie at [lynn.leslie@choa.org](mailto:lynn.leslie@choa.org) or (404) 785-7337.

### May 19 Trot to Clot Walk & Run

Hemophilia of Georgia's 3rd annual Trot to Clot Walk and Run will be Saturday, May 19 at Stone Mountain Park. This fun, family-centered event will raise money to fund Camp Wannaklot, the only camp in Georgia that gives kids and teens who have inherited bleeding disorders the chance to have fun, learn new skills, and be with other kids just like them. Everyone who registers to walk or run by April 27 will receive a Trot to Clot t-shirt and free admission to Stone Mountain Park. Additional information and registration details are available online at [www.hog.org/trot](http://www.hog.org/trot).

### May 19 The Atlanta Kidney Walk

The Atlanta Kidney Walk will be held Saturday, May 19 at 9:00 a.m. at Turner Field, Atlanta. The Kidney Walk is a fun, inspiring community fundraiser that calls attention to the prevention of kidney disease and the need for organ donation. It's also an opportunity for patients, family, friends and businesses to come together. For more information, contact Cara McKinney at [cara.mckinney@kidney.org](mailto:cara.mckinney@kidney.org) or (770) 452-1539 ext. 11.