



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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#### National Wear Red Day promotes statewide heart disease awareness

##### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The American Heart Association's national Go Red for Women campaign encourages the public to wear red on Friday, Feb. 5, "National Wear Red Day," and to show support in the fight against heart disease. This year's nationwide theme is "Our Hearts. Our Choice," and suggests that women improve their heart health to live stronger, longer lives.

The Alabama Department of Public Health and the American Heart Association's collaborative Go Red for Women events include outreach to special populations—Women's Health Information For the Incarcerated Initiative (WHI-FI), and faith-based outreach to African American and Hispanic/Latino communities throughout the state.

The Office of Minority Health, with the American Heart Association, will hold a Health Disparities Satellite Conference and Webcast, *Go Red to Prevent Heart Disease in Women*, on Wednesday, Feb. 17, from 2 - 3 p.m. For more information or to register for this program, go to [www.adph.org/alphntn](http://www.adph.org/alphntn). Go Red materials have also been sent to the 67 county health departments and senior centers across the state to support local community awareness for statewide outreach.

WHI-FI, a health education and referral program coordinated through the Office of Women's Health in partnership with Aid to Inmate Mothers, is an initiative that aims to raise awareness around women's health issues, promote healthy lifestyles, and assist incarcerated women with reconnecting to health care providers in their local community. WHI-FI further supports the "Go Red" campaign by encouraging an awareness of heart disease in women at the three women's prison facilities in Alabama: Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women, Montgomery Community Based Institution and Birmingham Work Release Center for Women.

"A healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk for cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "Women need to take charge of their heart health, and make the right choices that relate to proper nutrition, physical activity, doctors' visits and their general health, which are essential for a longer life."

Modifiable risk factors for heart disease and stroke include high blood pressure, elevated blood cholesterol, diabetes, overweight and obesity, smoking, physical inactivity, and low fruit and vegetable consumption.

Heart disease deaths and death rates in Alabama in 2007 were 11,761 deaths, with 254.1 deaths per 100,000 population. In Alabama, as in the nation, cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke, has been the leading cause of death since 1938; together they account for approximately 40 percent of all deaths. Nationally, Alabama has the fourth highest death rate from heart disease and the seventh highest from stroke. One out of every three women will die of heart disease; yet, according to the American Heart Association, only 21 percent of women believe heart disease is their greatest health risk.

Sponsors of these Go Red For Women statewide events this year include the Alabama Department of Public Health and the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association Greater Southeast Affiliate.

For more information about Go Red For Women, call 1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278) or visit [www.GoRedForWomen.org](http://www.GoRedForWomen.org).