

EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 20, 2008

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Go Red For Women Ranks America's Most Heart Friendly Cities for Women

Go Red For Women study recognizes Minneapolis-St. Paul, DC and San Francisco as Most Heart Friendly

(DALLAS, May 20, 2008) – Heart disease, the No. 1 killer of women, may hit closer to home than many realize. Today, the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women movement released a study, conducted by Sperling's BestPlaces, revealing the nation's top 10 most – and least – heart friendly cities for women. Minneapolis-St. Paul took the title of Most Heart Friendly city for women with the lowest cardiac mortality rate for women, low hypertension rates and highest exercise rates. Nashville, on the other hand, finished at the bottom of the rankings with high obesity and smoking rates.

Based on the heart friendly benefits cities have to offer their residents and the personal lifestyle choices of its residents, Go Red For Women and BestPlaces found the following Heart Friendly rankings:

Most Heart friendly Cities for Women

1. Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN
2. Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC
3. San Francisco-San Jose-Oakland, CA
4. Denver-Aurora, CO
5. Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA
6. Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA
7. Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR
8. San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA
9. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA
10. Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ

Least Heart friendly Cities for Women

1. Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN
2. St. Louis, MO
3. Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI
4. Pittsburgh, PA
5. Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX
6. Columbus, OH
7. Cincinnati-Middletown, OH
8. Las Vegas-Paradise, NV
9. Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH
10. Indianapolis, IN

"Go Red For Women engaged in this study to help women better understand how personal health and environmental risk factors influence heart disease," said Mary Ann Bauman, Medical Director for Women's Health and Community Relations, INTEGRIS health, INC. "Our goal is that individual residents, communities at large and government officials can use this information to help create socio-political change at the grassroots level as well as educate women on their personal risk for heart disease."

Fast Facts:

- Minneapolis-St. Paul, Boston and Phoenix reported the lowest female cardiac mortality rates in the country; Detroit, Nashville and St. Louis reported the highest.
- San Francisco, Denver and Los Angeles were the thinnest mega metros; Cleveland, San Antonio and Columbus were among the most overweight.
- Surprisingly, our nation's capital, Washington, D.C., reported the lowest stress ratings of all the mega metros while Portland, OR reported the highest stress levels in the category.
- Generally, California and Colorado cities scored well in the Heart Friendly Cities study; the metros that scored the lowest in the study were found in the South and Midwest.

The Importance of Heart Disease Awareness and Personal Risk Assessment

“With the release of this study, Go Red For Women seeks to build heart health awareness across the country and in every woman's own backyard,” said Bauman. “As long as women remain unaware that heart disease is their No. 1 killer, that statistic is not likely to change. With this knowledge Go Red For Women hopes every woman will take action to reduce their personal risk.”

Other alarming heart health statistics include:

- **One in three** adult women has one or more forms of cardiovascular disease.
- Cardiovascular disease kills **approximately 460,000 women per year, approximately one woman per minute.**
- More women die of cardiovascular disease than the **next five causes of death combined, including cancer.**

Heart Friendly Tips... No Matter Where You Live

Regardless of where your city falls on the list, cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 killer of women in all 50 states. Living in a heart friendly city does not automatically make you heart healthy, and the reverse is also true. Whether you live in Denver or Detroit, your heart is in your hands. Heart disease is largely preventable if you work to lower your risks by making changes to your everyday lifestyle.

There are some basic steps you can take to make a positive impact on your health, your family's health and your city's status on the list. Start by visiting www.GoRedForWomen.org to get your “Go Red Heart Style Guide” with actionable plans, tips, recipes, a free magazine subscription and more to help you live a heart healthy lifestyle.

Here are some simple ways you can be heart healthy, regardless of your area code:

- **Eat healthy!** Learn the basics about a heart healthy diet with Go Red tools and tips for balanced nutrition, delicious recipes and more.
- **Get Physically Active!** Regular, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity improves cardiovascular fitness and helps reduce risk of heart disease and stroke. You can incorporate physical activity into your daily routines with Choose To Move, a 12-week physical activity and nutrition program that can be customized to fit every lifestyle. Register at www.GoRedForWomen.org.
- **Know your numbers!** Tracking blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose and weight numbers can help you to keep them in a healthy range. To learn more about your 10-year personal risk for heart disease, take the Go Red For Women Heart CheckUp at www.GoRedForWomen.org.
- **Build Community!** Join the Go Red For Women online community to share heart health stories and connect with women who share a passion for women's heart health nationwide.
- **Make A Difference!** Support the HEART For Women Act and other policies to help make our nation's cities heart healthier for all. Visit www.GoRedForWomen.org to access tools to help you communicate directly with members of Congress.

Go Red For Women recognizes that disparities exist within each city due to variances in access to medical care, race, socio-economic status and neighborhood structure. Even if your city falls at the top of the list, specific challenges may affect your city's residents differently. Remember that everyone can use the "Go Red Heart Style Guide" to create a personal action plan – no matter where you call home.

For more information about Go Red For Women, the Go Red Style Guide or to see where your city ranked, visit www.GoRedForWomen.org.

About Go Red For Women

Since 2004, Go Red For Women has captured the energy, passion and intelligence of women to work collectively to wipe out heart disease — the No. 1 killer of women. We want millions of women across America to take heart disease personally. Go Red For Women engages women and the men who love them to embrace the cause. Healthcare providers, celebrities and politicians also elevate the cause and spread the word about women and heart disease. For more information about Go Red For Women, please call 1-888-MY-HEART (1-888-694-3278) or visit GoRedForWomen.org. The movement is nationally sponsored by Macy's and Merck & Co., Inc.

About the American Heart Association

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart disease and stroke. These diseases, America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases claim nearly 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2006–07 the association invested more than \$554 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit americanheart.org.

About Sperling's BestPlaces

For nearly 20 years, Bert Sperling has been helping people find their own "Best Place." As the foremost creator of these studies, his work appears in national media nearly every month. His firm, Sperling's BestPlaces, puts facts about cities and living in the hands of the public, so they can make better decisions about best places to live, work, retire, play or relocate.

About the Study Methodology

The study focused on the 200 largest metro areas in the United States, which are home to nearly 75% of the nation's population. The research analyzed 22 factors for each location in the following categories:

- Risk indicators – factors that may lead to heart disease (predictive)
- Health status – metrics that indicate the current state of heart health (present day)
- Heart disease statistics – measurement of heart disease in the population (mortality)

Sources will be available on www.GoRedForWomen.org on May 20.

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