

For Immediate Release:
Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph
Community Health Agency

Contact: Mary Proctor
517-437-7395 ext. 137

Women and Heart Disease

Friday, February 4, 2005 is National Wear Red Day: Americans nationwide will wear red to show support for women's heart disease awareness. **The Heart Truth is: "Heart Disease Doesn't Care What you Wear—It's the #1 Killer of Women"** According to the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency this is a public awareness campaign to help women protect their heart health and spread the word that heart disease is a women's issue. The red dress is the national symbol for women and heart disease. The campaign is sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute in partnership with many national and community organizations and health agencies around the country.

Coronary heart disease is the main form of heart disease. It develops over many years and affects the blood vessels of the heart. It can result in heart attack, disability, and death. A heart attack occurs when an artery becomes blocked, preventing oxygen and nutrients from getting to the heart.

Often called heart disease, coronary heart disease is one of various cardiovascular diseases, which are disease of the heart and blood vessel system. Other cardiovascular diseases include stroke, high blood pressure, and rheumatic heart disease. Many women fail to recognize the seriousness of heart disease or take it personally. Once developed, heart disease can be managed but not cured. **Heart disease is the #1 killer of American women.** One in every three women dies from heart disease. Not surprisingly, in our tri-county area it is also the # 1 killer of women. Heart disease kills more women in our tri-county area than cancer and strokes **combined**. In 2003, four out of every 10 deaths in our tri-county area were attributable to heart disease.

Risk factors are habits or conditions that increase the chance of developing a disease. Many risk factors for heart disease can be prevented or controlled. Having more than one risk factor is especially serious. Women should talk to a health professional about their individual risks and how to lower them.

Risk factors for heart disease are:

Smoking	High blood pressure
High blood cholesterol	Overweight/obesity
Physical inactivity	Diabetes
Family history	Age (for women, 55 and older)

For more information, visit NHLBI's, The Heart Truth campaign and its Red Dress symbol at www.hearttruth.gov

For local data, Community Health Agency services and Public Health issues visit us at www.bhsj.org