



## Memorandum

**Date:** January 22, 2008

**To:** Mayor and City Council

**From:** Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor, First District *BL*  
Suja Lowenthal, Second District *SL*  
Dee Andrews, Sixth District *DA*  
Tonia Reyes Uranga, Seventh District *TRU*

**Subject:** Resolution in Support of the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women Day"

### REQUESTED ACTION:

Respectfully request the City Attorney draft a resolution declaring Friday, February 1, 2008, "Go Red for Women Day" in support of the American Heart Association and its campaign to reduce heart disease and strokes among women of all ages and backgrounds.

Request the City Manager notify City Employees about participating in *Go Red for Women Day* and provide information from the American Heart Association about how to take positive actions to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Nationwide, heart disease and strokes are the No. 1 & 3 leading killers of women, claiming the lives of nearly 500,000 every year. According to the American Heart Association, that is more than the next five causes of death in women combined. As a result, AHA hopes to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke in women by at least 25% by 2010 with campaigns such as *Go Red for Women Day* that encourage women to learn more about the disease, get check-ups, exercise regularly and embrace a healthy diet.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes diseases of the heart and blood vessels. It is typically a process that begins in childhood and involves a gradual buildup of plaque inside your arteries. Plaque contains fat, cholesterol and other substances, and can grow large enough to significantly reduce blood flow through an artery. Most of the damage occurs when a plaque becomes fragile and ruptures.

Plaques that rupture can cause blood clots to form. These clots can block blood flow at the site of the rupture or can break off and travel through the artery to another part of the body. If either happens and blocks an artery that feeds the heart or brain, it causes a heart attack or stroke. Strokes can cause paralysis, affect language and vision, and cause other problems. Seeking early treatment can minimize the potentially devastating effects of a heart attack or stroke, but to receive them, a person must recognize the warning signs and act quickly.

**Here are some signs a heart attack may be happening:**

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath. This feeling may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs of discomfort. These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
- As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

For more information about Go Red for Women day and ways to reduce heart disease, visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

## GO RED FOR WOMEN IS OUT TO CHANGE THE WORLD

**BEFORE THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION INTRODUCED GO RED FOR WOMEN**, few people realized just how big a threat heart disease poses to women. Many were stunned to learn that heart disease is the No. 1 killer of American women.

### **GO RED FOR WOMEN SET OUT TO RAISE AWARENESS – AND MORE!**

Thanks to active participation by our sponsors, corporations and concerned individuals, Go Red For Women has made great strides on four fronts:

1. Awareness of women's cardiovascular vulnerability has increased dramatically. In fact, recognition among women of heart disease as their leading cause of death has jumped from 37 percent in 1997 to 57 percent today.
2. In 2007, Go Red For Women launched an interactive, online assessment tool that identifies a woman's risk factors and provides a personalized action plan to reduce heart disease risks. Since then, over 425,000 women have taken charge of their heart health by taking the Go Red Heart CheckUp at [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org).
3. 60,000 Go Red Physicians' Tool Kits, distributed nationwide, have helped the medical community implement American Heart Association women's guidelines. Likewise, 1.1 million special reports on women and heart disease have been distributed through hospitals and health plans.
4. Vital research that could ultimately save lives through new treatments and preventive measures has been funded as the result of Go Red For Women events. Since its inception, Go Red For Women has raised more than \$72 million. With your contribution, we can keep promising research projects alive.

Our progress has been steady, but we have a long way to go. Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of American women. We believe that with the help of organizations like yours, we can change that.



[goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org)

## woman to woman: learning from survivors

These three women learned the hard way that being female is no protection against heart disease. They hope their stories help other women recognize the importance of actively loving their hearts.



**MARISOL MELENDEZ MINER** I was born into a Puerto Rican family in Crown Point, Indiana, 27 years ago. At age 22, I was fighting a constant battle against pain and panic brought on by unexplained heart palpitations. My mother finally had seen enough and insisted on taking me to a cardiologist. "You need to do this," she said. "It's serious."

I had been having palpitations and my heart would race. I would freak out and wonder, "Am I having a heart attack?"

The cardiologist discovered that I had mitral valve prolapse. A small amount of blood was leaking backward through a heart valve that doesn't close normally, creating a murmur. My cardiologist prescribes medicines and sees me every six months. I have an annual electrocardiogram to see if the leak is getting worse.

If I've learned one thing from my experience, it's this: *Get checked out as quickly as you can. Make the lifestyle changes.*



**ARLENE WILEY** I was always tired ... and lightheaded. I had to do deep breathing and I would think that was doing the trick. It wasn't, though, because even though I was just 48, I had congestive heart failure. My weakened heart wasn't pumping enough blood to my other organs. My lungs were filling with fluids, and I just couldn't catch my breath.

I learned I had a big problem after celebrating my daughter and a nephew's graduation from high school. I went to bed that evening feeling fine, but soon my husband was rushing me to a hospital. I couldn't breathe, and when I could breathe in or out a little, it was a rattling noise like when my father died.

I'm managing with medications, regular visits to my cardiologist, 30 minutes a day on a treadmill and heart-healthy eating.

My advice to a woman with similar symptoms: *Instead of trying to diagnose yourself, go get checked out.*



**MARY GILL** I had never felt anything like it. Nausea swept over me in waves and I couldn't draw a full breath of air. My shoulders and back ached terribly and I broke out in a cold sweat and was about to pass out. My husband John rushed me to a hospital, where doctors found that my heart was fluttering instead of beating normally, and an artery that supplies blood to my heart muscle was blocked. A cardiologist removed the blockage and inserted a small wire mesh tube called a stent to keep the artery open so blood could flow freely. My heart had been severely dysfunctional but it healed completely.

I was 42 then, and am 44 now. I work out regularly, take my medicine and generally live a healthy lifestyle. *I wish more women would get a complete physical exam, know their blood pressure and cholesterol numbers, and take charge of their health. There's just no reason not to know where you stand.*

## shop 'til fewer women drop

Fight heart disease in women and have fun at the same time.

Visit [shopgored.com](http://shopgored.com),

an online store where

you shop for **go red**

accessories, clothing

and educational items.

Best of all, net proceeds

from each purchase

support the **go red for**

**women** movement.



American Heart Association

Learn and Live.

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American Heart Association

1.888.MY HEART

[goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org)

# love your heart

National Wear Red Day February 1, 2008

## one day a year, what you wear is a matter of life and death



Most of the time, selecting clothing isn't that critical. But on Wear Red Day, it's vitally important. That's because it helps raise funds to fight the No. 1 killer of American women: cardiovascular disease, the cause of one in every 2.6 female deaths.

By wearing red and making a donation of \$5 or more, you can help us raise \$35 million for heart research and education programs, our goal for 2008.

Wear Red Day is also the time to make an important promise to yourself — the promise to love your heart by doing everything you can to reduce your risk factors. To learn more, keep reading or visit [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org).

## take a **go red** heart checkup before you see your doctor

**Our checkup** doesn't replace the one you have at your doctor's office. It just makes your medical checkup more valuable by providing a basis for a productive discussion with your doctor.

Here's how it works: Visit [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org) and click on Go Red Heart CheckUp. Then follow the steps to get a personal heart-health assessment.

This interactive tool will help evaluate your risk factors, identify risk factors you can change and provide a personalized action plan you can print and take with you to your doctor's office.

## 10 ways to love your heart

- Get regular checkups.
- Know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers.
- Follow your doctor's recommendations for diet and exercise.
- Take prescribed medications as directed.
- If you smoke, quit now.
- Get at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day. Join our 12-week physical fitness program at [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org).
- Eat a heart-healthy diet, including fruits and vegetables, whole-grain foods and fish.
- Limit food high in saturated fats and dietary cholesterol.
- Limit your salt intake to 2300 mg of sodium a day.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink in moderation — an average of no more than one drink a day for nonpregnant women.

Make **go red for women** last a lifetime. Joining the movement will help you stay up to date on the latest heart-health information, so you can love your heart all year round. Register at [goredforwomen.org](http://goredforwomen.org).