



HEART DISEASE DOESN'T CARE WHAT YOU WEAR—IT'S THE #1 KILLER OF WOMEN®

THE RED DRESS® IS THE NATIONAL SYMBOL FOR WOMEN AND HEART DISEASE AWARENESS

## THE HEART TRUTH® CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

### ***The Heart Truth*® : Heart Disease is the #1 Killer of Women**

*The Heart Truth* is that of the women who died in 2008 (the most current year for which data are available), 1 in 4 died from heart disease, and most failed to make the connection between risk factors—such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol—and their personal risk of developing heart disease.

### ***The Heart Truth* Campaign: Serious Messages about Women's Heart Health**

*The Heart Truth* is a national awareness campaign for women about heart disease sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Through the campaign, the NHLBI leads the nation in a landmark heart health awareness movement that is being embraced by millions who share the common goal of better heart health for all women.

*The Heart Truth* campaign warns women about heart disease and provides tools to help them take action against its risk factors. It is primarily targeted to women ages 40 to 60, the time when a woman's risk of heart disease begins to increase. However, it's never too early—or too late—to take action to prevent and control risk factors since heart disease develops over time and can start at a young age—even in the teen years.

The campaign message is paired with an arresting visual—the Red Dress—designed to warn women that heart disease is their #1 killer. *The Heart Truth* created and introduced the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness in 2002 to deliver an urgent wake-up call to American women. The Red Dress® reminds women of the need to protect their heart health, and inspires them to take action.

*The Heart Truth* partners include: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Office on Women's Health (OWH), and other organizations committed to the health and well-being of women.

### **Campaign Background**

*The Heart Truth* campaign began in response to recommendations of more than 70 experts in women's health who met in March 2001 to develop a national action plan to reduce the toll of heart disease on American women. The campaign was developed with input from partner organizations and focus groups with women conducted across the country. This research revealed that most women underestimate their personal risk and do not fully understand the devastating impact that heart disease has on one's life and family. The research strongly supported the urgent need to tell women about their risk of heart disease and how to lower it.

### **What's a Red Dress Got to Do With It?**

The Red Dress was designed to build awareness that women are at risk for heart disease, and motivate them to take action to reduce their risk. The creative concept of a Red Dress tested well with diverse women who cited its ability to get attention, convey the seriousness of heart disease, and change the perception that it is only a man's issue.



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The symbol links a woman's focus on her "outer self" to the need to also focus on her "inner self," especially her heart health. The Red Dress serves as a red alert to convey the message that "Heart Disease Doesn't Care What You Wear—It's the #1 Killer of Women.® "

Seeking to advance the symbol, *The Heart Truth* forged a groundbreaking collaboration between the Federal government and the fashion industry, an industry intrinsically tied to female audiences. As a result of this partnership, fashion leaders—including top designers, models, and celebrities—have demonstrated their support for the issue of women and heart disease by participating in *The Heart Truth's* Red Dress Collections at New York's Fashion Week annually since 2003.

*The Heart Truth* launched the first Red Dress Collection at Fashion Week in February 2003, when 19 designers—from Vera Wang to Donna Karan to Oscar de la Renta—contributed red dresses for a stunning display under the Bryant Park tents. In February 2004, the fashion platform expanded with the creation of the first annual National Wear Red Day® and the same-day debut of Red Dress Collection 2004—a fashion show featuring red dresses from the industry's elite designers worn by top fashion models and celebrities. The campaign returned to New York Fashion Week in 2005-2012 with celebrity-studded fashion shows. Some of the world's most recognized stars have walked the runway for *The Heart Truth* in new collections of designer red dresses including: Linda Evans, Rebecca Romijn, Chaka Khan, Christie Brinkley, Giselle Blondet, Patti LaBelle, Ann Curry, Cat Deeley, Ditta Von Teese, Eve, Natasha Bedingfield, Gayle King, Laila Ali, Suzanne Somers, Taraji P. Henson, Kristin Chenoweth, Sheryl Crow, Kelly Ripa, Heidi Klum, Venus Williams, Angela Bassett, Rachael Ray, Christie Brinkley, Thalia, Vanessa Williams, Rita Moreno, Billie Jean King, Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson, LeAnn Rimes, Ashanti, Christina Milian, Fergie, Eartha Kitt, and Liza Minnelli.

### National Wear Red Day®

*The Heart Truth* and many individuals and organizations celebrate National Wear Red Day on the first Friday of February each year. From a celebrity-studded Red Dress fashion show in New York City to local community events and awareness activities, thousands across the country wear red to unite in the national movement to give women a personal and urgent wake-up call about their risk for heart disease. National Wear Red Day serves as a reminder to every woman to care for her heart, because heart disease is the #1 killer of women. On this day men and women can participate by wearing a red dress, shirt, tie, or the Red Dress Pin.

### Campaign Ambassadors

*The Heart Truth* has been honored to have the support of former first lady Laura Bush, and 12 other first ladies, in sharing the message of better heart health for all women. Mrs. Laura Bush served as the national ambassador from 2003-2009 and *The Heart Truth* was part of her Women's Health and Wellness Initiative, leading the Federal government's effort to raise awareness of heart disease in women and encourage women to take action to protect their heart health. As part of her ambassadorship, Mrs. Bush has participated in more than a dozen national and local events across the country as well as hosted two White House events including a February 2008 reception to salute the fashion industry's support of *The Heart Truth* and the campaign's 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



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The campaign looks forward to continued support from America's first ladies in raising awareness about heart disease, the #1 killer of women through such programs as the First Ladies Red Dress Collection. Most recently, the Collection exhibited at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas. Previously, the Collection toured the country with extended displays at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., the Ronald Reagan Museum and Library in California, and at the National First Ladies Museum in Canton, Ohio. The Collection has featured red dresses and suits worn by 14 of America's First Ladies, including Michelle Obama, Laura Bush, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barbara Bush, Nancy Reagan, Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford, Pat Nixon, Claudia (Lady Bird) Johnson, Jackie Kennedy, Mamie Eisenhower, Bess Truman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Lou Hoover.

### Campaign Resources and Activities

The campaign offers a wide variety of resources to reach individuals and local communities with *The Heart Truth*, messages, including:

- Suite of **educational materials and marketing materials**, including a Red Dress Pin, wallet card, 100-plus page *Healthy Heart Handbook for Women*, campaign brochure, speaker's kit, audience specific fact sheets, real women posters, and print and broadcast public service announcements (PSA).
- **Campaign Web site**, which includes resources, and a National Wear Red Day Online Toolkit.
- **Online tools**, such as PSA banners with campaign imagery and messaging; healthy action community badges; and a Facebook page and a Twitter handle that provide a number of tools and resources as well as a forum for people to discuss heart disease in women.
- **Community programs**, such as the Single City program, *The Heart Truth* Champions program, and *The Heart Truth* Road Show, that extend the reach of *The Heart Truth* messages into local communities.
- **Community Partnerships** with national non-profit organizations reinforced at the local level to extend the campaign's reach and messages.
- **Corporate partnerships** to expand the reach of *The Heart Truth* campaign's message, including collaborations with Diet Coke, General Mills, IMG Fashion, Swarovski, Time Warner, Albertsons, and American Express, among others.
- **Women of color and faith-based initiatives** with organizations such as The Links, Inc., National Black Nurses Association, the Association of Black Cardiologists, National Coalition of Pastors' Spouses, and the National Latina Health Network.

### Making A Difference

*The Heart Truth* is making progress in the fight against heart disease in women. Heart disease deaths in American women continue to decline, and have declined ten years consecutively, from 1999-2008. Awareness of heart disease among women has nearly doubled in the last 12 years. More than half of women know heart disease is their leading cause of death, up from 34 percent in 2000. Further, awareness is leading to action. In 2009, 48 percent of women reported discussing heart disease with their doctors, up from 30 percent in 1997.

The Red Dress has become one of the most recognizable health symbols in the United States—in 2010, more than half (58 percent) of women recognized the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease, up from 25 percent in 2005. And women who reported recently seeing or hearing about the Red Dress or the campaign were



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substantially more likely than other women to take at least one risk-reducing action as a result. More women are living longer, healthier lives, and fewer are dying of heart disease. But challenges remain, and many women still do not take heart disease seriously and personally. *The Heart Truth* campaign will continue to build awareness among women and motivate them to take action for heart health.

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