

What is the "Assault on Cardiovascular Mortality" project?

It is a project originated by the Alabama chapter of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and co-sponsored by the Alabama Department of Public Health designed to bring attention to the epidemic of cardiovascular morbidity and mortality in the great state of Alabama. The importance of the project was recognized by the national ACC who awarded the Alabama chapter its "National Chapter of the Year Award" and by the Alabama House of Representatives who passed a special resolution supporting it.

Why the importance of the project?

Alabama has the fourth highest death rate due to cardiovascular disease and the seventh highest death rate due to stroke in the US. 34 percent of all deaths in Alabama are due to cardiovascular disease.

What is the project?

The project consists of local cardiologists throughout the state engaging with local civic leaders to deliver a local "town hall talk" developed by the state ACC chapter that educates people about the risk factors that cause cardiovascular disease and what each person can do to lower their own individual risk.

What causes cardiovascular disease?

Many factors play into the development of cardiovascular disease including a person's family history. However, 90 percent of heart attacks world-wide are due to nine modifiable risk factors.

Why is Alabama so greatly affected by cardiovascular disease?

Many of the aforementioned nine modifiable risk factors are much more prevalent in Alabama as compared to the rest of the US. These risk factors include smoking, diabetes, morbid obesity, hypertension, improper diet and lack of exercise. The good news is that all of these risk factors can be addressed and a person's risk can be greatly lowered.

What can I do to lower my cardiovascular risk?

First, avoid tobacco in any form. Second, know your blood pressure and treat it if required. A large percentage of hypertensives are not aware of their disease and the majority with known hypertension is inadequately treated. Third, know your lipid profile and follow national guidelines in the treatment of your lipids. Fourth, aggressively pursue control of diabetes if present. Finally, maintain as close to your ideal body weight as possible through a "heart healthy" diet and exercise regimen.

How is Huntsville Hospital contributing to the cardiovascular health of north Alabama?

Huntsville Hospital will be the only hospital in North Alabama to qualify for participation in the AHA Mission Lifeline Project - a national project promoting early intervention for STEMI's. The quicker the treatment of an acute MI the lower the death rate and the less the long term effect of the MI. Huntsville Hospital and UAB lead the state in rapid intervention for AMI in data recently available from Duke Medical Center. The goal of reperfusion of an acute MI in less than 90 minutes is met by only 73 percent of state hospitals performing primary PCI as compared to 94 percent at Huntsville Hospital and 95 percent at UAB.