



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Health

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Launch of Stronger Hearts Helpline using 2-1-1



The Department of Public Health in collaboration with San Bernardino County 211 is pleased to announce the launch of the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention Stronger Hearts™ Helpline.

The Stronger Hearts Helpline is part of San Bernardino County's existing 2-1-1 information and referral hotline. Heart failure patients and their loved ones can call the helpline to receive information on free, easy-to-use resources to help them understand and manage this complex disease.

The Stronger Hearts Helpline provides free, 24/7 access to:

- Referrals to medical professionals and clinics
- Information about heart failure and its treatment
- Exercise programs, nutrition and mental health programs
- Help with transportation to a doctor's appointment and delivery of prescription medications

A launch event was held on February 19 at the Fontana Cypress Neighborhood Center with support from San Bernardino County Fifth District Supervisor, Josie Gonzales; Fontana Mayor, Acquanetta Warren; and California State Assembly Member, Cheryl Brown, who said "I'm so proud that the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention selected San Bernardino County to participate in a pilot program that will offer a free 24 hour call center for heart disease patients and their families. This exciting addition to our current 211 call system is critical. Currently, San Bernardino County has some of the highest rates of heart disease throughout the nation. It is my hope that this innovative program will help strengthen our communities and reduce incidents of heart failure. I applaud this outstanding accomplishment and look forward to seeing the impact it will have in our community."

"We continually strive to make resources easily accessible to our residents. The Stronger Hearts Helpline is a great example of that," San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chairman James Ramos stated. "Through this collaboration, our residents will have free access to vital information to help them maintain healthy hearts and healthy minds."

County Health Officer, Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, commented on the need to provide assistance to the disparate number of individuals living with heart failure in San Bernardino County. "Many people with heart failure don't fully understand the intricacies of the disease; to them, it may sound like a death sentence. The Stronger Hearts Helpline will give them easier access to information that can help them take control of their condition and stay healthier longer. I am

thrilled that the National Forum chose our community to pilot this important resource.”

Other speakers included: John Clymer, Executive Director of the National Forum; San Bernardino County Fire Chief, Mark A. Hartwig; George Lamb, CEO of the Faith Advisory Council for Community Transformation; Sally Kaiser-Dyer, RN from the Loma Linda International Heart Institute; and Gary Madden, Director of 211 San Bernardino San Bernardino County.

San Bernardino County has the second-highest rate of heart-failure treatment in the state, as nearly 20 percent of Medicare beneficiaries in the county are being treated for the disease. That is almost 6% higher than the state and national average.

For more information about the Stronger Hearts Helpline or the United Way 2-1-1 Referral Center, dial 2-1-1 from any telephone.

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