

Awareness Day Turnkey Kit



HEART
failure
AWARENESS

National Heart Failure Awareness Week
February 8 – 14, 2009

 **Heart Failure Society**
of America

www.abouthf.org



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Introduction

The mission of the Heart Failure Society of America (HFSA) is to make more Americans aware of the symptoms and risks of heart failure and increase awareness that heart failure is a distinct disease of epidemic proportions in the United States. The goal for the coming year is to educate primary care physicians, patients, their families and individuals at risk about this silent epidemic and at the same time open the doors to new treatments. Most people are not cognizant that heart failure affects more than 5 million Americans and that 400,000 to 700,000 more will be diagnosed this year alone.

To increase national awareness about the severity of this disease, HFSA was instrumental in having the week of Valentine's Day declared as National Heart Failure Awareness Week by the U.S. Senate in 2000. The number of facilities holding events during Heart Failure Awareness Week has been steadily increasing. We hope you will help promote heart failure awareness by planning an event in your area.

HFSA has developed this kit to assist you in conducting your own Awareness Day program to educate members of your local community about heart failure, including the risks and symptoms for heart failure and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment.

Be prepared to offer physician referrals to attendees, if requested.

Materials for the program should include:

- Sign-in sheet
- Patient education materials: Use materials your facility has developed or the following materials may be purchased from the HFSA. You may use the order form on page 21 of this kit or you may visit the HFSA web site: www.abouthf.org for ordering and pricing information. Allow 3-4 weeks for delivery.
 - What You Should Know About Heart Failure (DVD)
 - FACES of Heart Failure (symptoms card)
 - What You Should Know about Heart Failure (brochure)
 - Educational modules
- Evaluation form (see Templates section of this kit, page 14)





Preparing for Your Program

There are four basic steps in preparing for your Heart Failure education program.

Step 1

Familiarize yourself with the information provided in this kit

Materials offered in this kit include:

- Information and materials for promoting and publicizing the program
 - Inviting community members
 - Sample invitation and flyer
 - Using the media to publicize your event
 - Sample media materials
- Patient education materials available from HFSA. You may use the order form on page 21 of this kit or you may visit the HFSA web site: www.abouthf.org for ordering and pricing information.
 - What You Should Know About Heart Failure (DVD)
 - FACES of Heart Failure (symptoms card)
 - What You Should Know about Heart Failure (brochure)
 - Educational modules
- Slide presentation for the program leader: What is Heart Failure? www.hfsa.org/hfa_materials.asp
- Evaluation form

Step 2

Begin advanced planning to ensure success of your program

You will need to select and confirm a date, time, and location for your heart failure program. Ideally, select a date that will allow you about 4 to 5 weeks to prepare for and publicize your program. To maximize attendance, it is usually best to hold heart failure educational programs between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. However, the time may vary from center to center so it is important to take into account local demographics and habits of likely attendees when determining the timing of your program. The location you choose should be convenient and easy to find.

For most communities, it is important for public parking to be available; in some communities, accessibility to public transportation is critical. If your institution or facility is not centrally located or does not offer suitable parking, you may want to consider a different location – for example, a community center, school or church.

It can be helpful to meet with the people who will be involved in various aspects of the program to discuss plans and assign specific tasks and responsibilities (e.g., securing a location for the program, making sure any necessary audiovisual equipment is available, duplicating handouts and handling the local newspaper, television, and radio station publicity).

Following are a suggested timeline and checklist to help simplify the coordination of your program.





Preparing for Your Program *(continued)*

Event checklist

Week 5

- Begin planning
- Hold a brainstorming session to consider dates, sites, time, co-sponsors, and possible healthcare professionals to serve as program leader (*do this even further in advance if possible*)
- Contact possible co-sponsors, such as local hospitals, civic organizations, and local associations
- Confirm date, time
- Check calendar-of-events deadline (*do this even further in advance if possible*)*
- Visit and reserve or confirm selected site
- Secure program leader and provide him or her with suggested slides
- Confirm sponsors
- Choose a media spokesperson
- Prepare or order handouts for attendees

Week 4

- Develop a list of local media outlets
- Localize and produce flyers and/or invitations
- Obtain list of potential participants and community residents
- Localize and produce press materials
- Localize and produce media alert

Week 3

- Post flyers and/or posters in the community
- Send promotional program materials to local media
- Mail flyers and/or invitations to attendees
- Begin contacting reporters, particularly radio and newspaper

Week 2

- Reconfirm program leader
- Ask someone to take pictures during your event

Week 1

- Contact reporters at TV stations
- Distribute HFSA press release
- Continue phone follow-up with radio and newspaper reporters
- Reconfirm selected site
- Arrange logistics: catering, audio visual, etc.

Day Before

- Conduct heavy media follow-up with TV, radio, and newspaper outlets
- Check all logistics, catering

Day of Event

- Conduct last minute media follow-up with reporters, especially TV

Week after event

- Review evaluation forms; summarize feedback to assist in planning next year's event
- Send event summary and photos (if available) to: HFSA, Court International, Suite 240 South 2550 University Avenue West St. Paul, MN 55114
- Thank those who contributed to the success of your event



* Calendar-of-events editors may need to receive materials earlier, depending on their schedules.



Preparing for Your Program *(continued)*

Step 3

Recruit a cardiology health professional to lead the program

The program outlined in this kit is designed to be presented by a physician (cardiologist or other appropriate specialist) or other health professional well versed in the field of cardiology/heart failure such as a nurse, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant.

The professional you choose to lead the program will need to know the date, time, and location of your program, the nature of the audience, and the specific role he or she will play. It is also advisable to share the program materials, particularly the slide kit and suggested discussion points with the leader well in advance of the meeting.

Make sure that your program leader provides you with information on his or her educational and professional experience so that you can briefly and accurately introduce the leader to the audience at the beginning of the program.

Step 4

Publicize the program to all interested parties

You may want to inform the public directly about your upcoming program. This kit contains a sample invitation and flyer that should be mailed out 3 to 4 weeks prior to your event. You may also wish to post either the invitations or flyers on community bulletin boards.

The section of this kit called the "How-to Guide" outlines logistics and timing for the various publicity options for promoting your program through local newspapers, television, and radio stations. For greatest success in working with the media to publicize the event to the general public, you will need to begin your promotional efforts at least 4 weeks prior to your program.



Presentation

Program leader's slide show

"What is Heart Failure?", a PowerPoint presentation, is available on the HFSA web site at www.hfsa.org/hfa_materials.asp





How-to Guide

Promoting and publicizing your program

Inviting members of the community

One inexpensive way to publicize your heart failure event is by distributing a flyer. A sample flyer is provided in the Templates section of this kit. You can print this flyer on white paper and ask doctors in your community to post it in their offices. You can also post it in public areas of your hospital or medical center, on bulletin boards in other hospitals and on community bulletin boards in churches, synagogues, libraries, schools, colleges, and other public places. Civic-minded businesses in your community such as local pharmacies, supermarkets, and movie theatres may also allow you to leave flyers in their places of business.

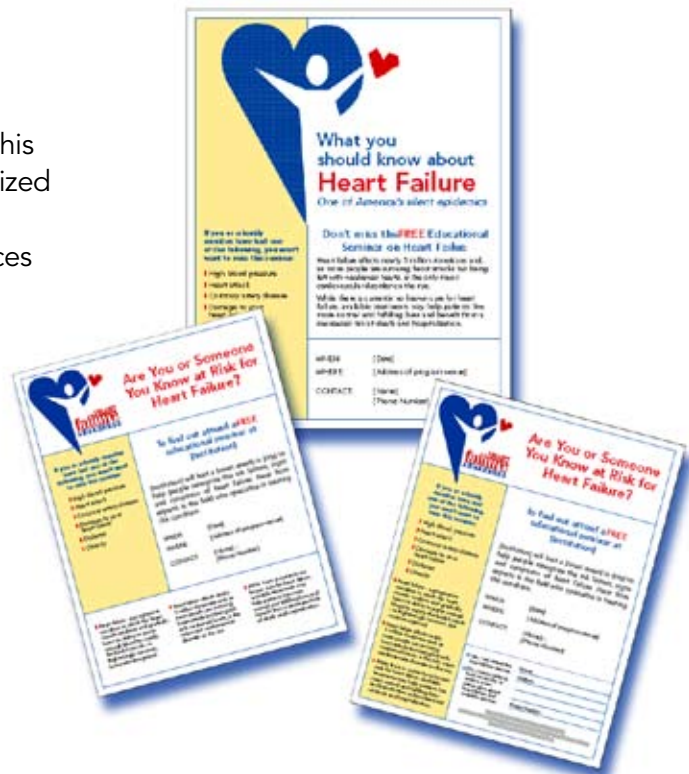
In addition to the flyer, the Templates section includes an invitation that can be mailed to the patients in your institution's database. If your facility routinely issues mailings to people in the community, the person in charge may have a more comprehensive mailing list of local residents to whom you could send the invitation.

Also enclosed in the Templates section of this kit is an event poster, which can be customized and used to promote your individual program. It can be posted in the same places recommended above for the flyer.

Working with the media to publicize your event

You can enlist the aid of newspapers, television, and radio stations in your community to help publicize your heart failure event in a highly cost-effective manner. Without having to buy advertising space, you can work with local newspapers, television, and radio stations to:

- Raise your community's awareness of heart failure
- Recruit attendees for your heart failure event
- Increase the visibility of your institution





Media relations timetable

You should set aside 4-5 weeks to carry out media relations for your heart failure event but, if staff time is limited, you may need to begin earlier. Here is a checklist of activities:

At least 5 weeks before the event

- Choose a designated media spokesperson for the event (see page 8) and be sure to keep him or her up-to-date on the details of the program.
- Adapt calendar-of-events media alert and distribute to outlets per deadlines (*calendar-of-events listings may have earlier deadlines*).

5 to 4 weeks before the event

- If your institution's public relations/communications department does not have an up-to-date media list, start researching the media outlets you will want to contact (see page 7). You can also start to compile your mailing list of patients and community residents to whom you will mail an invitation.
- Fill in the missing information on your press materials and, once the details are confirmed, make enough copies on your letterhead to mail to the names on your media list.

4 to 3 weeks before the event

- Finalize your media list and divide the media outlets by type (print, radio, television). You'll want to begin calling print and radio reporters several weeks before the event and contact TV stations starting 1 week before the day of the activity.
- Have labels or envelopes addressed.
- Mail the appropriate press materials to your contacts at the media outlets.

3 weeks to 1 day before the event

- Follow up your mailing with phone calls to all the editors and reporters on your media list to remind them of the event, answer questions, and arrange interviews for your spokesperson. Reporters may receive dozens of mailings like yours every day. Do not be discouraged if they do not remember your event and, if they do not have the information handy, offer to fax it to them.
- If you cannot reach your media contacts with one call, try again.
- Encourage reporters to print or air items and/or public service announcements on the upcoming event, as well as news reports or feature stories that highlight heart failure and its symptoms. This can help recruit attendees for your event.

If you have any questions about managing local newspapers, television, and radio stations, check with your institution's public relations/communications office.





Developing a media list

A media list is valuable only if it is accurate and up-to-date. Journalists often transfer departments and change companies. Make sure the information on your media list was obtained or verified no more than 4 to 5 weeks before your event. Press releases and other media communications may be ignored if they are addressed to the wrong person, and time that should be spent talking about your heart failure event may be wasted trying to find the right reporter at the last minute.

If your facility has a public relations or public affairs department, they may already have a list you can use – but again, verify that the information is up-to-date.

To create your own list, first determine which news outlets in your area you would like to target. Remember to include local television stations (broadcast and cable) and radio stations, as well as city, suburban, and neighborhood newspapers (dailies and weeklies).

Contact each news outlet, asking for names of reporters or editors who cover health and medicine, lifestyle topics, and community events or calendar-of-events listings. Also, find out who handles public service advertisements and announcements (PSA's) – usually the advertising department for print outlets and the public affairs director at radio and television stations. Be sure to verify the spelling of each person's name and his or her title, address and phone/fax numbers.

Ask each outlet about its requirements for calendar-of-events listing and PSA's. In most cases, outlets will require a typewritten paragraph listing the name, title, date, and location of the event and the name of the sponsoring organization. A sample public service ad is included in the Template section of this kit and sample text for a radio announcement is included on page 12.

Be sure to use the correct journalists' names and titles in all communications addressed to media outlets. Materials sent to "Editor" or "Producer," or simply to the publication or station, are not likely to be received by the appropriate person in a timely fashion.





Choosing a media spokesperson

You will need to select someone to serve as a key contact for media inquiries for your heart failure event. As director of the event, you may want to serve as the spokesperson. Other possibilities are the person who will lead the program or someone from your heart failure department. Your spokesperson should be:

- Well-versed in heart failure
- Familiar with your institution and its programs
- Knowledgeable about your heart failure program
- Well-spoken
- Comfortable in front of a microphone or camera (experience in speaking with the media is a plus)
- Available for telephone, on-site, or in-studio interviews, especially during the week or two preceding the event

Dos and don'ts for media spokespersons

In making follow-up calls to newspapers, television and radio stations, the minimum goal is to have the publication or station give the details of your event in a calendar-of-events listing or public service announcement. You can accomplish even more with a news or feature article or broadcast segment about heart failure that also provides the details about your event. For this to happen, the person making the calls should try to interest reporters in interviewing your spokesperson. The caller may not always be successful, but it is well worth the effort because the spokesperson can use an interview to raise public awareness of heart failure. The reader, viewer, or listener may be more likely to pass information about your event on to friends and family members who may not have seen or heard the story.

An interview can be an enjoyable experience, but your media spokesperson should be aware of both opportunities and the potential pitfalls. The following dos and don'ts will help your spokesperson prepare for and control the interview. And that is the goal – to control the interview – so that important information about heart failure and your event is communicated clearly and makes an impact on the audience.





Dos and don'ts for media spokespersons

Do:

- Try to determine the reporter's objective before each interview. What key points does the reporter want to cover? What kinds of questions will the reporter be asking?
- Identify 3 to 5 message points (also known as pitch points – see page 10) Try to get each pitch point into your interview at least once. Reporters do not often ask questions leading directly to your pitch points, so look for openings and make connections that will get you to these points yourself.
- Explain why it is important for people with heart failure to be diagnosed and treated. A few statistics are fine, but if you spout too many numbers, they will not be remembered.
- Offer information on heart failure and available treatment options. You can refer to scientific data, but use simple lay terminology, especially in broadcast interviews. You can use the language provided in this kit as a guide.
- Describe heart failure symptoms using anecdotes and examples to make the information come to life. Spokespersons who are clinicians can draw on their own clinical experience.

Don't:

- Allow any myths or misinformation about heart failure to slip by unchallenged; promptly correct any misconceptions that come up during an interview.
- Deviate from the science and your own experience, or make claims that cannot be supported.
- Answer questions about which you feel unprepared or uncomfortable. If you do not know the answer to a reporter's question, ask for the journalist's phone number and deadline and tell the reporter that you or someone else will call back with the answer. Then be sure to respect the reporter's deadline. In a live broadcast interview, simply say that you do not know the answer and, if appropriate, explain why. You should know the details about the event and the most important facts about heart failure, but you do not have to know every single statistic.





Pitch points

The following pitch points are suggested message points you can use when “pitching” your story to the media. Because reporters are very busy, you may only get to talk to them for a very short time, or not at all and resort to leaving a message on their voice mail. It is, therefore, important to determine, in advance, what is most important to each reporter and his/her readers, and then start the conversation with that “pitch.” Try to be natural and not to sound scripted when you call reporters and you will likely see great results!

- Hello, my name is _____. I’m calling from _____ to tell you about the Heart Failure Society of America’s annual educational initiative to raise awareness about heart failure, a potentially life-threatening disease, and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. Heart failure is a disease of epidemic proportion, affecting nearly 5 million Americans and causing or contributing to a quarter of a million deaths each year. In fact, [xx] people in [insert city] alone are affected by heart failure.
- In conjunction with Heart Failure Awareness Week (February 8-14), heart physicians all across the country are informing patients, their families, and individuals at risk about the severity of heart failure and the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. As part of National Heart Failure Awareness Week 2009, we are committed to helping raise awareness about this deadly disease by offering a free educational seminar. [Include local program information to localize this message.]

- We encourage you to attend and/or cover this important local event about heart failure in your community. [Insert name of media spokesperson] is available for interviews to underscore the significance of this unique local event and provide perspective on the overall approach to diagnosing and treating heart failure. [Insert event details.]

Other pitch points

- Heart failure is the only major cardiovascular disease on the rise and causes more hospitalizations than all forms of cancer combined. Unfortunately, millions of people are living with heart failure but are unaware of it because the symptoms are often mistaken for signs of “just getting older.” Common symptoms include shortness of breath, fatigue, ankle swelling, and chest congestion.
- Heart failure is not a heart attack, but a progressive condition in which the heart’s muscle becomes weakened after it is injured from something like a heart attack or high blood pressure and gradually loses its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body’s needs. While there is currently no known cure for heart failure, early diagnosis and proper treatment can offer patients a more normal life expectancy.
- If your readers/listeners/viewers have had a heart attack or experience shortness of breath and are unable to partake in their daily activities like they used to, I encourage them to see a physician and seek treatment. Early diagnosis and treatment can help to slow the progression of this devastating disease.





Press Materials

Media alert for calendar listings

To promote your program in the calendar-of-events sections of area newspapers, and on radio and television stations that broadcast such listings, you can send a media alert to the individuals responsible for compiling these calendars. You can also promote your program through local hospital newsletters or bulletins. Check deadlines for the listings at least five weeks in advance of your event, and be sure to meet the deadlines. Then follow up by phone with the people to whom the media alert is sent to make sure it was received and the listing will be included. You may even be able to secure listings for your event in multiple sequential listings of the same media outlet.

Press release

You can reinforce the need for your heart failure event by distributing a press release announcing the awareness week and underscoring the prevalence of heart failure in the United States, to local newspapers, television, and radio stations. Press releases should be distributed 1 to 2 weeks before your event and you should follow-up by phone with each reporter to whom it is sent.

Print public service advertisement

A public service advertisement (PSA) is an advertisement that a newspaper or magazine agrees to run at no cost, as a service to their readers – provided space is available. You can ask the various publications in your area whether they print public service ads and, if they do, what the specifications are (e.g., dimensions, file formats, and deadlines). Follow up by phone with each individual who receives your advertisement to determine if and when the advertisement will be published. Be sure to ask if they will be able to run the advertisement more than once.





Press Materials *(continued)*

Radio public service announcement

A radio PSA is an announcement that a radio station agrees to air at no cost as a service to the community. PSAs usually run 30 or 60 seconds and are read by station announcers. Your PSA should be mailed or e-mailed to the public affairs directors at local radio stations 3 to 4 weeks before your event (check with each station to determine deadlines), and you should follow up by phone with the media contacts to whom it is mailed. Typically, a radio station will air an accepted PSA several times within a given period, such as a week before the event.

Following is a sample 30-second radio PSA.

“Are you suffering from high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or obesity?

Have you had a heart attack or damage to your heart valves?

You could be one of the 5 million people suffering from heart failure – a frighteningly common but underrecognized condition in which the heart muscles weaken and gradually lose ability to pump enough blood to supply the body’s needs.

[Institution] will offer a free heart failure educational seminar on [Date] at [Time]. For more information, call [Contact] at [Phone number]”

[Click here to download the radio PSA text file.](#)

Op-Ed (opinion/editorial)

An Op-Ed is printed in the editorial section of newspapers and is usually between 250 and 500 words, but can be shorter or longer. It is similar to an editorial in that it is in a letter form and allows the author to express his/her feelings on any given topic, but different because it is not written by an editor. This type of document provides an excellent opportunity to increase heart failure awareness as well as promote your program.

We strongly encourage you to author or work with the program leader, physician, or other heart failure professional to author an Op-Ed and submit it to newspapers in your area. The first 1 to 2 sentences of the Op-Ed should contain a brief bio of the author, highlighting his or her expertise in the field of heart failure.

As with other press materials, it is essential to follow up by phone with each individual to whom you send your Op-Ed to determine if and when it will be printed.



Program Handouts

Handouts for program attendees

Information on heart failure should be available on-site for event attendees. Use materials that your facility has developed. As an alternative, the HFSA has educational materials available for purchase.

HFSA's DVD, *What You Should Know About Heart Failure*, can be utilized in a number of ways:

- Show it during the event
- Offer it as a take-away
- Play it continuously in offices/centers in recognition of Heart Failure Awareness Week

Please visit www.abouthf.org for ordering and pricing information on all HFSA patient education materials:

- What You Should Know About Heart Failure (DVD)
- FACES of Heart Failure (symptoms card)
- What You Should Know about Heart Failure (brochure)
- Educational modules

If your local center has any information about the services it offers patients with heart failure, this should be available to attendees.



Templates

The templates are shown below. You may view them at 100% on the following pages of this kit, or you may click on the link below each thumbnail to download a Word document from the HFSA web site. After downloading each Word template, you will need to enter the specific information about your event, highlighted with the [square bracket] characters. Once customized with your specific information, your materials will be ready to print and distribute.



Media alert for calendar listings

[Download Word Template](#)



Print public service announcement

[Download Word Template](#)



Sample invitation

[Download Word Template](#)



Sample flyer

[Download Word Template](#)



Event poster

[Download Word Template](#)



Evaluation form

[Download Word Template](#)





Heart Failure Awareness Week

[Institution] Offers **FREE** Heart Failure Education Program in [City]

WHAT: [Institution] will host a [insert event] in [city] to help people recognize the risk factors, signs and symptoms of heart failure. Hear from experts in the field who specialize in treating this condition.

WHEN: [Date]

WHERE: [Address of program venue]

WHY:

- Heart failure – a progressive condition in which the heart muscle weakens and gradually loses its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body's needs – is frighteningly common, but underrecognized.
- Heart failure affects nearly 5 million Americans, and as more people are surviving heart attacks but being left with weakened hearts, heart failure is the only major cardiovascular disease on the rise. An estimated 400,000 to 700,000 new cases of heart failure are diagnosed each year and the number of deaths in the U.S. from this condition has more than doubled since 1979, averaging 250,000 annually. In comparison, the death rate from coronary heart disease has dropped by 49 percent over a similar time period. An estimated \$8-15 billion is spent each year on the costs of hospitalization due to heart failure, which is twice the amount spent for all forms of cancer.
- While there is currently no known cure for heart failure, recent scientific advances in treatment offer patients a more normal life expectancy.

CONTACT: [Name]
[Phone Number]



Heart Failure Awareness Week

FREE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Are you suffering from high blood pressure,
high cholesterol, diabetes, or obesity?

Have you had a heart attack or
damage to your heart valves?

You could be one of the 5 million people suffering from heart failure –
a frighteningly common but underrecognized condition in which the
heart muscles weaken and gradually lose ability to pump enough
blood to supply the body's needs.

To find out more about heart failure, the only major cardiovascular disease on
the rise, join Dr. [Name] of [Institution] for a free heart failure educational seminar
[insert local program info]

Date:

Time:

Location:

Address:

For further information and to register for the free program,
please call [Name] at [Phone number]



Are You or Someone You Know at Risk for Heart Failure?

If you or a family member have been affected by one of the following, you won't want to miss this seminar:

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Coronary artery disease
- Damage to your heart valves
- Diabetes
- Obesity

■ Heart failure – a progressive condition in which the heart muscle weakens and gradually loses its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body's needs – is frighteningly common, but underrecognized.

■ Heart failure affects nearly 5 million Americans and, as more people are surviving heart attacks but being left with weakened hearts, it is the only major cardiovascular disease on the rise.

■ While there is currently no known cure for heart failure, recent scientific advances in treatment offer patients a more normal life expectancy.

To find out, attend a **FREE** educational seminar at [Institution]

[Institution] will host a [insert event] in [city] to help people recognize the risk factors, signs and symptoms of heart failure. Hear from experts in the field who specialize in treating this condition.

WHEN: [Date]

WHERE: [Address of program venue]

CONTACT: [Name] –
[Phone Number]

Yes, I will attend the heart failure seminar.

(name)

No, I cannot attend, but I would like to receive more information about heart failure and available services.

(address)

(phone number)

PLEASE MAIL TO [INSERT LOCAL INFO],
FAX TO [INSERT FAX NUMBER] OR CALL [INSERT PHONE NUMBER]
TO REGISTER FOR THIS PROGRAM



Are You or Someone You Know at Risk for Heart Failure?

If you or a family member have been affected by one of the following, you won't want to miss this seminar:

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Coronary artery disease
- Damage to your heart valves
- Diabetes
- Obesity

To find out, attend a **FREE** educational seminar at
[Institution]

[Institution] will host a [insert event] in [city] to help people recognize the risk factors, signs, and symptoms of heart failure. Hear from experts in the field who specialize in treating this condition.

WHEN: [Date]

WHERE: [Address of program venue]

CONTACT: [Name] –
[Phone Number]

■ Heart failure – a progressive condition in which the heart muscle weakens and gradually loses its ability to pump enough blood to supply the body's needs – is frighteningly common, but underrecognized.

■ Heart failure affects nearly 5 million Americans and, as more people are surviving heart attacks but being left with weakened hearts, is the only major cardiovascular disease on the rise.

■ While there is currently no known cure for heart failure, recent scientific advances in treatment offer patients a more normal life expectancy.



What you should know about **Heart Failure**

One of America's silent epidemics

If you or a family member have been affected by one of the following, you won't want to miss this seminar:

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Coronary artery disease
- Damage to your heart valves
- Diabetes
- Obesity

Don't miss the **FREE** Educational Seminar on Heart Failure

Heart failure affects nearly 5 million Americans and, as more people are surviving heart attacks but being left with weakened hearts, is the only major cardiovascular disease on the rise.

While there is currently no known cure for heart failure, recent scientific advances in treatment offer patients a more normal life expectancy.

WHEN: [Date]

WHERE: [Address of program venue]

CONTACT: [Name]
[Phone Number]

