

Armed with a \$200,000 grant from the Office on Women's Health, NJ Department of Health and Senior Services, the Women's Heart Foundation began a statewide initiative November 2003 to *Take New Jersey Women to Heart*. A media campaign was launched in partnership with the New York Times. Fourteen hospital systems partnered with the Foundation to outreach with a critical message to women about gender differences, disseminating a brochure that the Foundation created to raise awareness and improve access to care. Because the recognition of heart disease as the #1 killer of women has grown exponentially throughout the country as a major health initiative, the Women's Heart Foundation is poised to meet the needs of New Jersey women by benefiting from its strong relationship with healthcare partners around the State.

February 2004, WHF began its Gender Care Initiative with a series of medical conferences offering continuing education credits for health professionals. The first conference was attended by 45 nurses and 40 lay and the second, October, 2004, was attended by 50 nurses and 550 members of the general public with a program that featured keynote Nieca Goldberg, MD, Director of the Women's Cardiovascular Program at Lenox Hill Hospital and author of "Women are Not Small Men".

In March 2004, WHF piloted Women's Well Days[©] at the YWCA in Trenton. The empowering thirteen-week curriculum was implemented by WHF nurses and volunteers. A modified version was made available for use as a corporate *Lunch and Learn* program.

Outreach

- WHF partnered with WEGMANS grocery store and three hospitals to provide educational outreach to women for National Women's Heart Wellness Day February 1. Over 300 women received health information and 50 were screened for heart disease and offered lifestyle counseling. WHF health partners expanded the message throughout New Jersey by replicating its Women's Heart Week program.
- Fourteen hospital partners for the New Jersey Initiative were provided a free training day, thereby introducing each to the new health materials designed to *Take New Jersey Women to Heart*, including ten MS Powerpoint modules that could be used as turnkey community wellness programs.
- WHF partnered with Welch's to produce a national public service message — television infomercial advocating for women to take up walking exercise in addition to eating a balanced diet for prevention of heart disease. "Nutrition and Exercise Help Fight Heart Disease", sponsored by Welch's and the Women's Heart Foundation, resulted in 10,480,000 media impressions.
- WHF nurses outreached to senior citizens about medication safety and about women's heart disease issues. Over 5,000 personal health files were dispensed to this vulnerable population
- May 7, WHF conducted its first ever Women's Heart Walk and Run on Mother's Day Weekend. Blessed with beautiful weather, 270 walkers and runners attended the event.

Advocacy

WHF's gender care messages have become a marketing vehicle for hospitals espousing to be more sensitive and answering to women's special cardiac care needs. Women represent a large portion of the healthcare dollar with over 68% of women making healthcare decisions for their families. Women's healthcare purchasing power is starting to be recognized.

Future

The Foundation continues to work at institutionalizing its message through creative and effective women's heart wellness programs and by developing healthy relationships with other community organizations around the State. It also conducts an annual awards reception to recognize leading women's heart advocates and outstanding volunteers. Its purest value is that of an organization that designs, develops and implements successful heart wellness programs for women, and it has received national recognition for this strength. With its winning reputation, the organization has been approached by health teachers at an inner-city school system to develop a health and wellness program for teen girls and in the fall of 2004, the Women's Heart Foundation will be introducing a landmark new health and fitness program called Teen Esteem[™].