

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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### Governor Jack Dalrymple Proclaims February Heart Health Month in North Dakota



— State of —  
**North Dakota**  
Office of the Governor  
Jack Dalrymple  
Governor

*Pictured: (front) Amy Davis, Gov. Jack Dalrymple, Jake Douts, (back) Melanie Carvell, Shila Thorson, Krista Fremming, Tom Nehring, Charlie Jeske, Jen Miller, and June Herman.*

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Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).

BISMARCK, N.D. –Governor Jack Dalrymple has proclaimed February 2016 as American Heart Month in North Dakota. In recognition of American Heart Month, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) continues to raise awareness about the importance of prevention, early detection, and treatment of heart disease.

Heart disease is currently the leading cause of death in the state of North Dakota and in the United States. Every minute counts when someone is having a cardiac emergency. “It is important for individuals to be able to recognize a cardiac emergency, know how to dial 9-1-1 to access first responders immediately, begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and have public access to Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs),” said Shila Thorson, Stroke and Cardiac Systems of Care Coordinator for NDDoH. The North Dakota Cardiac System recently formed the Cardiac Ready Community program based on these important elements which promote survival from a cardiac event, such as cardiac arrest. Powers Lake was the pilot community for the project and has recently been designated a Cardiac Ready Community by the NDDoH.

One major risk factor for heart disease and stroke is hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 of 3 U.S. adults—or 67 million people—have high blood pressure. Only about half (47%) of these people have their high blood pressure under control. North Dakota’s clinical, community, public health and state partners have been collaborating to implement evidence-based practices to identify, control and improve blood pressure.

“Hypertension, the ‘silent killer,’ often has no signs or symptoms, so many people are unaware they have it. If left undetected and untreated, the condition can cause damage and lead to heart attacks, strokes, and other serious diseases,” said Thorson. “The North Dakota Department of Health encourages all adults to have their blood pressure screened as the disease can affect any age group including young adults.” The American Heart Association defines normal blood pressure as less than 120/80 mm Hg.

Not all heart disease can be prevented due to uncontrollable risk factors such as age, ethnic background and family history of heart disease. However, simple lifestyle changes such as eating a diet low in fat and salt, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol use can reduce the risk of suffering from heart disease.

For more information, contact Shila Thorson at 701.328.4569 or [smthorson@nd.gov](mailto:smthorson@nd.gov).

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PROCLAMATION  
**AMERICAN HEART MONTH**  
FEBRUARY 2016

**WHEREAS**, while progress has been significant in reducing deaths from heart disease, cardiovascular disease continues to be the nation's leading cause of death and costliest disease with direct and indirect costs estimated to be \$320.1 billion; and

**WHEREAS**, heart disease is the leading cause of death in North Dakota, accounting for 1,352 deaths in 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Dakota Cardiac System's mission is to be an effective system of acute cardiovascular emergency care throughout the state and ensure and facilitate the implementation of the system; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cardiac Ready Communities project in North Dakota promotes public education, CPR training, and AED access to the general public; and

**WHEREAS**, CPR skills training is now a benchmark outcome within new North Dakota quality PE standards at both the middle school and high school level, with almost 7,000 North Dakota students graduating every year with the lifesaving skills of CPR; and

**WHEREAS**, hospitals and emergency medical services across the state of North Dakota are equipped with lifesaving equipment, such as 12-lead cardiac monitors and LUCAS automated CPR devices; and

**WHEREAS**, during American Heart Month, the American Heart Association is promoting education and awareness by encouraging citizens to learn the warning signs of heart attacks and strokes; and

**WHEREAS**, North Dakotans are encouraged to support the ongoing fight against heart disease by learning CPR and dialing 9-1-1 to activate the lifesaving cardiac system of care that will increase survival rates; and

**WHEREAS**, all North Dakota citizens are encouraged to recognize the critical importance of identifying symptoms, taking preventive measures to live healthy, and incorporating tools and skills that will increase survival rates and save thousands of lives each year.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, as Governor of the State of North Dakota, I do hereby proclaim February 2016, **American Heart Month** in the state of North Dakota.

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