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THE HEART AND STROKE
FOUNDATION EATING PLAN

Press Release

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The Heart and Stroke Foundation SA to commemorate World Heart Day: Action for CVD Reduction

The much-anticipated World Heart Day is consistently highlighted on the 29th September annually and is the culmination of Heart Awareness Month. As a member of the World Heart Federation (WHF), the Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFSA), aligns with the organization's global theme: *"Use Heart for Action"*. The theme is an open one and the main aim is to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their heart health, and also form a part of advocacy efforts for stronger health policies and initiatives to reduce the burden of disease. The vision of HSFSA is to promote cardiovascular health and cerebrovascular health through advocacy, influencing policy, providing information, tools, and support, which is aligned with the theme driven by the WHF.

World Heart Day allows the Foundation and many other national, local and global organizations to join hands in a unified effort to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease by empowering people to adopt healthy behaviors and seek appropriate care early in the onset of disease, and over the life course. The Foundation goes further by assisting people to adopt and make healthier food choices easier by purchasing products with our Heart Mark logo which forms a part of our Heart Mark Endorsement Programme.

Stats SA has reported that the country is facing a crisis of CVD burden as it reports high mortality and morbidity rates for cardiac and other circulatory conditions. In 2020, Stats SA reported other mortality trends, indicating that diabetes mellitus, hypertensive disease, cerebrovascular disease and heart disease were among the top 10 leading natural causes of death in South Africa. These conditions add up to an estimated 17% of all reported deaths in 2020. The report further stated that about 25 South Africans die from heart failure per day. Heart failure (HF) and associated risk factors was the focus of the HSFSA's HAM campaign. Our CEO, Professor Pamela Naidoo, together with stakeholders and the Foundation's key donors have realized that the South African public does not fully understand the complexity of CVD, especially with respect to the different types of conditions within the heart disease cluster. Heart failure (HF) is but one example of many cardiac conditions. HF, however, is underdiagnosed and under-reported. The CEO continued to state that oftentimes one will not experience symptoms of heart disease for a long while until it becomes acute. It is essential, therefore, that individuals over the age of 45 years, with a family history of CVD need to have their annual medical examination.

Over the four-week period of HAM, the Foundation highlighted the following related themes on HF. The themes were as follows: **Week one:** *What is heart failure?* We looked at different types and symptoms of HF. **Week Two:** *The causes of HF;* **Week three:** *Management of heart failure and living with heart failure;* and finally, **Week four:** *Diabetes type 2 and other risk factors for heart failure.*

Early detection of cardiovascular disease is crucial, and can be achieved through regular health screenings, understanding family history, and paying attention to symptoms. To avoid cardiovascular disease, maintain a heart-healthy diet, engage in regular exercise, avoid smoking and alcohol consumption, get enough sleep, and manage stress through healthy methods like exercise, meditation, or yoga.

During HAM, the Foundation implemented many activities in community-based settings in the provinces of KZN, Western Cape, and Gauteng. These included activities from our different programmes: Heart Awareness Programmes (Mended Hearts and Stroke Group Meetings, School Health Promotion Initiative, community health risk assessments, and community health talks), Nutrition Science Programme (Heart Mark Endorsement Programme and CVD updates) and Public Relations and Communications Department that amplified our health

messages. As a Foundation we hope to inspire the nation to take their health into their own hands and look after their heart health through self-management and medical care.

On WHD look out for the various landmarks, nationally and globally, lighting up in red to raise awareness about CVD burden. Amongst these include: The national franchise of Life Healthcare Group, V&A Waterfront Amphitheatre as well as the “Cape Town” entry point sign, Red Berry Farm, Pavilion Mall, Canal Walk Mall, Mall of Africa, Radisson Red as well as segments of Kyalami Grand Prix Circuit. Further to this, our teams across provinces, especially in the Western Cape, Gauteng, and KZN provinces will be partnering with the HSFA by lighting up in red and hosting activities in recognition of WHD.

The HSFA team in the Western Cape will commemorate WHD by hosting an event at the V&A Amphitheatre on the 29th September 2024. The show which begins at 10am will host a plethora of well-known stakeholders, including the Head of Cardiology, Prof Ntsekhe, who will impart knowledge on heart health, and address prevention measures. The event will also showcase a fun-filled fitness variety act that promotes healthy choices as well as a focussed view on the stakeholders and their roles within the organization. In addition, a few patient voices (those affected by CVD) will relay their lived experience of CVD and also speak about the management of their chronic conditions. The Gauteng team will be at Cedar Square on the 27th September 2024 from 09h00 to 15h00 to raise awareness about CVD and provide much-needed information to the community. On the 28th September 2024, the team will be at University of Johannesburg Auckland Park campus with Lucky Star for a heartbeat session to deliver a health talk to students on how to adopt healthy eating behaviors that promote heart and brain health on a limited budget.

For media enquiries, please contact Themba Mzondi, PR and Communications Officer on 021 422 1586 / 078 113 5216 or email themba.mzondi@heartfoundation.co.za. Media engagement will be carried out by the CEO, Health Promotion Officers and Allied Health Care staff, such as Dietitians.

About the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA

The Heart and Stroke Foundation South Africa (HSFA) plays a leading role in the fight against preventable heart disease and stroke, with the aim of seeing fewer people in South Africa suffer premature deaths and disabilities. The HSFA, established in 1980 is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which relies on external funding to sustain the work it carries out.

The HSFA aims to reduce the cardiovascular disease (CVD) burden in South Africa and ultimately on the health care system of South Africa. Our mission is to empower people in South Africa to adopt healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices easier, seek appropriate care and encourage prevention.

For more information visit www.heartfoundation.co.za. You can also find us on www.facebook.com/HeartStrokeSA and www.twitter.com/SAHeartStroke

