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## Cardiovascular Health Education Within Culturally Diverse Populations

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Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains America's number one health threat, closely followed by stroke (the nation's number three health threat). The American Heart Association seeks to reduce death and disability due to cardiovascular diseases and stroke by 25% by the year 2010. In order to do so, we are targeting some efforts in disparate populations – African Americans and Hispanic/Latino Americans currently carry the largest burden of disease.

Research and statistics show that about 4 out of every 10 African Americans and about 3 out of every 10 Hispanic/Latino Americans have some form of CVD. Grave disparity is indicated as blacks between the ages of 35-74 CVD mortality is 30% higher than their white counterparts in New York State; even more astounding, blacks are 48% more likely to die from stroke than whites between the ages of 35 and 64.

Many are not knowledgeable about the risk factors and signs of heart disease and stroke, and lack both motivation and an adequate knowledge/skills base to implement lifestyle modifications toward risk reduction. Due to poverty and the myriad of stressors that plagued these communities, many never access or learn to successfully maneuver the healthcare system. Furthermore, research has documents that ethnic minority populations receive sub-standard care accessing today's healthcare systems. This is of grave concern to us. In our mission to drastically reduce disability and death caused by heart disease and stroke and to save lives, we have developed programs that specifically target and address the needs of the most affected people groups.