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Carolinas Medical Center, Sanger Clinic, Begin Program To Educate Women About Heart Disease

Most women have gotten the message about cancer. PAP Smears, breast self-exams, mammograms – all have become a part of their healthcare routine.

What far too many women don't know is that they are in much greater danger from heart disease. Nearly twice as many women die of cardiovascular disease as from all forms of cancer.

Carolinas Medical Center and The Sanger Clinic are working together through the Carolinas Heart Institute to bring this important message to women of the Charlotte area, through a program called **Heart of a Woman**. This campaign seeks to increase awareness of heart disease and help women recognize their risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and obesity.

Heart of a Woman will also teach women what the symptoms of a heart attack are, and that they are not always the same as those that men experience. And it will provide critical questions for a woman to ask her physician – questions such as:

1. What are my risk factors for heart disease and what can I do to lower my risk?
2. What are the warning signs of heart disease or heart attack?
3. What should I know about the effects of menopause on my health?
4. What is my blood pressure, cholesterol and body-mass index?
5. What is the best way to stop smoking?
6. Are my risk factors for heart disease the same or different for stroke?

7. What is the latest on low-dose aspirin for heart attack prevention and treatment?
8. If I experience chest pain, what is your overall plan for evaluation?
9. If I experience symptoms of a heart attack, what do I do?

Research in the Charlotte area has shown that just 28% of women aged 40-70 recognize their risk for heart disease. However there is an additional 55% who are truly at-risk but not aware of their vulnerability to a first heart attack. More than 1/3 of those at-risk have more than one risk factor.

With this information in-hand, Carolinas Medical Center and The Sanger Clinic are leading this educational effort. In addition to today's announcement, this campaign also includes advertisement by print and broadcast, our Health Centers located at several Charlotte YMCAs, as well as a website, www.heartofawoman.org.

"Our challenge is to get women to act," said Jeffrey Rose, M.D., a cardiologist at Carolinas Heart Institute. "Too often women delay seeing their physicians or going to a hospital emergency department when experiencing symptoms of a heart attack. Through this campaign, we are giving women tools to help them be more assertive in seeking quick, appropriate care. At the same time, we're educating doctors about their role in treating women for heart disease."

Lee Garvey, M.D., is an emergency medicine specialist at Carolinas Medical Center who has played an instrumental role in setting appropriate guidelines for women who come to the hospital with heart attack symptoms. "It's important that women recognize the symptoms of heart attack. It's also important for emergency physicians and nurses be trained to look for the signs of heart attack in women, some of which do differ from those men experience." There are seven beds in the CMC Chest Pain Center.

Carolinas Heart Institute is one of the most comprehensive cardiac treatment centers in the Southeast. With a history dating back to the 1950s, it is the busiest transplant center in the Carolinas. Last year more than one-thousand open heart surgeries were performed, more than 12,000 procedures were done in the eight heart catheterization suites. CHI includes The Dickson Heart Unit, an intensive care unit for heart patients; the James Heineman Vascular Center; a Cardio-Vascular Recovery Unit; Heart Failure Center; a Stent Center; the Heart Station where specialized testing occurs; and sophisticated clinical and basic medical research through the Cannon Research Center.

Through compassionate patient care, innovative medical procedures and a strong sense of community, the Sanger Clinic has built a reputation of trust and stability in the Carolinas. Founded in 1946 by Paul W. Sanger MD, the Sanger Clinic has grown to include an impressive staff of adult and pediatric cardiologists, and cardiac, thoracic and vascular surgeons. With 11 locations in both North and South Carolina, the Sanger Clinic offers convenient access to heart care. For more information, visit our website at www.sangerclinic.com