

Heart Truth Champions

A Program of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute and the Office on Women's Health (DHHS)

Overview

The Heart Truth is a national campaign for women about heart disease, sponsored by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the National Institutes of Health. Since 2002, *The Heart Truth* has been promoting women and heart disease awareness through educational outreach and materials and its Red Dress symbol. *The Heart Truth* Champions program is a train-the-trainer initiative aimed at equipping a cadre of health advocates and educators in local communities with important health information and educational materials about women and heart disease.

Objectives

Through *The Heart Truth* Champions program, NHLBI seeks to achieve the following:

- Bring *The Heart Truth* message to local communities, especially in communities with populations at high risk of heart disease.
- Develop a cadre of local *Heart Truth* Champions who are engaged in the campaign and committed to spreading *The Heart Truth* in their communities.
- Promote *The Heart Truth* messages and the Red Dress as the national symbol for women and heart disease awareness.

Strategy

In selected communities, Champions (health educators, health care providers, faith-based leaders, women's health advocates, etc.) are trained and equipped in a "train-the-trainer" forum to incorporate *Heart Truth* messages and materials into their existing community health outreach activities. *Heart Truth* Champions are selected based on their current position and involvement in health education and community outreach in their local area.

Program Overview

Each *Heart Truth* Champion is educated about women and heart disease awareness and *The Heart Truth* campaign. They are equipped with *Heart Truth* materials and resources, as well as ongoing technical support from campaign staff, and are charged with incorporating *Heart Truth* messages and/or materials into four events or programs in the 12 months following training.

The training consists of a full-day session with an overview of heart disease prevalence in women, an overview of *The Heart Truth* campaign, and an overview of the *Heart Truth* Champions program to educate the Champions about the issue and the community outreach goals. The remainder of the session includes a community audit where Champions are tasked with identifying activities within their communities that they know of and/or have plans to participate in and may be able to incorporate *Heart Truth* information. NHLBI provides a select quantity of educational materials to each Champion for distribution at local events, and *Heart Truth* Champions are provided a modest honorarium to cover their time and expenses (\$100).

Participants

12-15 individuals who are currently involved in health education and/or community outreach programs in their local area will be invited to the training. By nature of their current profession and community involvement, these Champions bring a knowledge and understanding of their community and have experience conducting outreach programs. During this "train-the-trainer" session, they are educated about heart disease in women and *The Heart Truth* campaign so that they can educate their local community through activities, vehicles, and channels they already have in place.

Each *Heart Truth* Champion is asked to commit to disseminating *Heart Truth* information and/or materials at a minimum of four community outreach activities in the twelve months following the training. These can include activities the Champion already has on his/her community outreach schedule, such as staffing a booth at a health fair, making a presentation to an organization to which the Champion belongs, distributing Red Dress Pins, or incorporating heart disease messages in other activities that the Champion already has scheduled. To maintain an accurate evaluation of the Champions program, Champions are asked to provide feedback on their activities.