

## News Release

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### ASTRAZENECA HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION AWARDS NEARLY \$2 MILLION TO 11 INNOVATIVE HEART HEALTH PROGRAMS

**WILMINGTON, Del., Jan. 27, 2016** – Eleven innovative community-based heart health programs with tailored approaches to prevent and control heart disease have received grants totaling \$1.9 million from AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation’s *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* program.

The Foundation is awarding grants to nonprofit organizations across the country that are conducting health programs for at-risk groups, from teenagers to Latinos and African American women. The programs reach people through home visits, clinics, community centers and more, using health coaches, support groups and mobile health units.

This year’s *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* grant announcements will include a series of roundtable discussions among grant awardees so that program representatives can share information on how they address cardiovascular disease in their communities.

“Cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death in our nation and these nonprofit organizations are working to reduce its impact at the community level,” said James W. Blasetto, MD, MPH, FACC, chairman of the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation. “We are proud to provide not only financial support to their initiatives, but to facilitate an exchange of ideas and key learnings from these programs.”

Since 2010, the *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* program has awarded more than \$19 million in grants to 47 organizations nationwide. More than 51,000 people have participated in a variety of programs funded through *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* and, as a result, are making lifestyle changes that lead to better health and lower risk of cardiovascular disease. They are losing weight, lowering their blood pressure and hemoglobin A1C levels, making healthier food choices and exercising more.

Organizations can learn more and apply for a *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* grant at [www.astrazeneca-us.com/foundation](http://www.astrazeneca-us.com/foundation). Applications must be submitted online no later than 5 p.m. EST on Feb. 25, 2016.

This year’s *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* awardees are:

**Catherine’s Health Center in Grand Rapids, Mich.; \$167,383:** “Healthy Heart Team” aims to improve the cardiac and overall health of patients with multiple medical conditions by providing team-based, patient-centered care in a safety-net setting. A registered nurse will direct and coordinate the efforts of a multidisciplinary care team. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation for the “Heart Smart Connections” program, 472 participants from previous grant years returned for an annual rescreening. In addition, more than 800 new participants were tracked for progress. Roughly 60 percent of new participants reduced their total cholesterol by an average of 17 points, and 50 percent decreased their

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systolic blood pressure by an average of 15 points. Roughly 44 percent of new participants reduced their Body Mass Index (BMI) by an average of two points, and more than 40 percent decreased their weight by an average of more than eight pounds.

**[City Health Works in New York, N.Y.; \\$178,809:](#)** “Extending care for hypertension beyond the confines of the healthcare system via neighborhood-based coaching integrated with primary care” aims to improve hypertension control and reduce health disparities related to cardiovascular disease among minority, low-income people through home- or community-based health coaching that closely coordinates with primary care providers and connects to social services. Motivational interviewing and self-management skills will focus on chronic disease, diet, physical activity, smoking cessation and medication adherence.

**[Drexel University, Stephen and Sandra Sheller 11th Street Family Health Services in Philadelphia, Pa.; \\$179,974:](#)** “R\*Health: Building Resilience for Life-Long Health” aims to reduce cardiovascular disease risk among at-risk adolescents through resilience-building, nutrition and cardiovascular disease education, exercise and a service-learning project that creates a peer group learning community to decrease the impact of adverse childhood events on heart health. The program will help teens improve their psychological resilience, learn about cardiovascular disease and its risk factors, eat more fruits and vegetables and increase their physical activity.

**[The Gaston & Porter Health Improvement Center Inc. in Washington, D.C.; \\$179,726:](#)** “Prime Time Sister Circles® (PTSC): An Effective Intervention for Reducing Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) in Mid-Life African American Women” aims to help mid-life African American women who are impoverished improve their physical and emotional health through an evidence-based, three-month, community-centered curriculum-grounded support group that will expand their knowledge of cardiovascular disease; change attitudes; help reduce blood pressure, weight and unmanaged stress; and help them to prioritize their health, eat better and exercise more.

**[Mallory Community Health Center in Lexington, Miss.; \\$180,000:](#)** “Take Control of Your Health” aims to improve metabolic control, psychosocial outcomes and quality of life in order to reduce diabetes-related complications, such as cardiovascular disease, among Mississippians in Mallory Community Health Center’s community through an evidence-based community intervention that encourages and teaches people with diabetes how to be active, eat healthy, monitor themselves daily, take medication, reduce risks, problem-solve and develop healthy coping habits for successful diabetes management. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation for the “Dr. Martha W. Davis Healthy Families Movement Program (HFMP),” 161 participants were provided with a comprehensive cardiovascular wellness program. Participants demonstrated an average nutrition knowledge score of 75 percent at the beginning of the program, compared to 88 percent by the end of the program. In addition, nearly half of the participants lost an average of over six pounds.

**[Manna Ministries Inc. in Picayune, Miss.; \\$180,000:](#)** “Heart 2 Heart Initiative” aims to engage the community in improving cardiovascular disease awareness, while improving the quality of care through screening, patient education, treatment and heart-healthy lifestyle support to reduce cardiovascular disease among primarily uninsured and underserved people. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, more than half of 124 program participants lost an average of seven pounds and just over 20 percent lost seven or more pounds. More than 70 percent of a group of 47 participants with elevated triglycerides lowered their levels by an average of 109 points. In addition, upon beginning the program, only

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45 percent of a group of more than 80 participants reported that they exercised two to three times per week, but by the end of the program this measure had increased to 61 percent.

**[North Georgia HealthCare Center in Ringgold, Ga.](#); \$179,200:** “POWER (Patient Outreach with Educational Resources)” aims to provide testing and education to prevent, diagnose and treat diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease among the most underserved and vulnerable residents in North Georgia HealthCare Center’s service area. The program gives people the opportunity to make better health choices while eliminating financial and transportation barriers by bringing these free services directly to them in their own community. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, the program tracked the progress of more than 650 participants and saw positive results for both clinical and behavioral outcomes. Average BMI decreased by more than 1.5 points and glucose, A1C and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) levels decreased as well. For these same participants, nutrition knowledge increased from an average of 87 percent at pre-test to an average of 94 percent at post-test.

**[St. Mary’s Health Wagon in Wise, Va.](#); \$180,000:** “Heart Health 1, 2, 3. Comprehensive Cardiovascular Disease Initiative for Diabetes Mellitus, Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity” aims to identify, minimize and prevent cardiovascular disease in individuals with metabolic syndrome, diagnosed as dysmetabolic syndrome x, diabetes and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, through health education, screening and medication management using a holistic medical approach and evidence-based practices. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, over 1,000 people participated in the program, with more than 50 percent lowering their blood pressure readings and over 40 percent decreasing their cholesterol levels. In addition, over 20 percent lost weight, and, nearly 90 percent of participants demonstrated increased knowledge in the cardiovascular disease process, risk factors and healthy habits.

**[West Virginia Health Right, Inc. in Charleston, W. Va.](#); \$179,686:** “SCALE (Sustainable Changes and Lifestyle Enhancement)” aims to achieve – through personal coaching, group support, nutrition education, improved diet and regular exercise – sustained weight loss in 100 obese patients to improve their health status and reduce cardiovascular risk factors. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, participants have shown improvement in blood pressure, BMI, cholesterol levels, A1C levels and weight. Improvements were much greater for those in the “motivated to change” group, with 100 percent of the 52 participants in this group losing weight and decreasing BMI, and 50 percent or more showing improvement on all other clinical measures.

**[Westminster Free Clinic in Thousand Oaks, Calif.](#); \$179,945:** “Corazones Sanos (Healthy Hearts) Program” aims to improve the health of low-income, uninsured Latinos who have or are at high risk of heart disease and/or diabetes through culturally competent, patient-centered services including: early detection through outreach and health screenings; access to preventative care and medical specialists; healthy lifestyle support, such as cooking demonstrations and physical activity; and empowerment through improvement of eating/exercising environments. As a result of previous funding from the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation, seventy-five percent of a group of 131 participants reduced their blood pressure and 50 percent or more of a group of more than 150 participants showed improvement in cholesterol levels, glucose, A1C levels and weight.

**[YMCA of Metropolitan Los Angeles – Mid Valley Family YMCA in Van Nuys, Calif.](#); \$158,566:** “Activate Your Heart/Active Su Corazon” aims to reduce the risk of hypertension and cardiovascular disease for underserved, low-income adults in the San Fernando Valley and help them build and sustain habits for a healthy lifestyle. The free, eight-week program uses

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education based on the American Heart Association's "Empowered to Serve" curriculum, cooking demonstrations, grocery store tours, group exercise and screenings.

**2015 Grant Award Total: \$1,943,289**

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## **About AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation**

Established in 1993, the AstraZeneca HealthCare Foundation is a Delaware not-for-profit corporation and a 501(c)(3) entity organized for charitable purposes, including to promote public awareness of healthcare issues, to promote public education of medical knowledge and to support or contribute to charitable and qualified exempt organizations consistent with its charitable purpose. *Connections for Cardiovascular Health<sup>SM</sup>* was launched in 2010 through a charitable contribution of \$25 million from AstraZeneca.

## **Media Inquiries**

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