



Department of Public Health (DPH)

Helpline Provides Resources to Heart Failure Patients

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A new helpline is expected to lead to stronger hearts in San Bernardino County. The Department of Public Health launched the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention Stronger Hearts Helpline. The Stronger Hearts Helpline is part of San Bernardino County's existing 2-1-1 information and referral hotline.

San Bernardino County has the second-highest rate of heart-failure treatment in the state, with nearly 20 percent of Medicare beneficiaries in the county are being treated for the disease— almost 6% higher than the state and national average.

Heart failure patients and their loved ones can call the helpline to receive information on free, easy-to-use resources to help them understand and manage the disease. The Stronger Hearts Helpline provides free, 24/7 access to referrals to medical professionals and clinics, information about heart failure and its treatment and help with transportation to a doctor's appointment and delivery of prescription medications. Callers can also learn about exercise programs, nutrition and mental health programs

A launch event was February 19 at the Fontana Cypress Neighborhood Center with support from San Bernardino County Fifth District Supervisor Josie Gonzales, Fontana Mayor Acquanetta Warren and California State Assembly Member Cheryl Brown.

County Health Officer Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare said the need to provide assistance to the disparate number of individuals living with heart failure in San Bernardino County.

"Many people with heart failure don't fully understand the intricacies of the disease; to them, it may sound like a death sentence," he said. "The Stronger Hearts Helpline will give them easier access to information that can help them take control of their condition and stay healthier longer."

Other speakers included: John Clymer, Executive Director of the National Forum; San Bernardino County Fire Chief, Mark A. Hartwig; George Lamb, CEO of the Faith Advisory Council for Community Transformation; Sally Kaiser-Dyer, RN from the Loma Linda International Heart Institute; and Gary Madden, Director of 2-1-1 San Bernardino County.

For more information about the Stronger Hearts Helpline or the United Way 2-1-1 Referral Center, dial 2-1-1 from any telephone.