



Partnership · Evaluation · Action · Community · Education

**Contacts:** Jane Berg  
UnitedHealth Group  
612-910-6471 (cell)  
952-945-7508

## **“PEACE OF HEART” CAMPAIGN COMES TO METRO WASHINGTON TO HELP FIGHT HEART DISEASE EPIDEMIC AMONG MINORITIES**

### *Hallmark of Campaign’s Health Screening Events Is Personalized Follow-Up*

**Washington, D.C. (Sept. 26, 2008)** – The PEACE of Heart campaign today came to Washington, D.C. and Maryland, launching a third preventive health screening and educational event as part of a national initiative to fight the epidemic of heart disease afflicting African Americans, low-income minority groups and other medically underserved communities. The campaign inspires people to lead heart-healthy lives through preventive screenings, education and hands-on support.

The goal is to move beyond mere screening and connect people with a physician to urge preventive steps that promote healthy lives. Participants will be encouraged to establish a “medical home” at a community health center or elsewhere. PEACE of Heart is also unique because of the personalized follow-up that happens the week after each screening to share screening results and again after about 90 days to ensure participants are adhering to any recommended treatment program. The acronym ‘PEACE’ encapsulates the core elements of the program: Partnership, Evaluation, Action, Community and Education.

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States, and is the number one killer of African Americans and Hispanics. Obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol – all risk factors for heart disease and stroke – show no sign of decline. Participants will be screened for blood pressure, cholesterol, BMI, and diabetes.

“At United Health Foundation, we believe there is an urgent need to address the prevalence of heart disease in the African American and other minority communities,” said Reed V. Tuckson, M.D., United Health Foundation board member and UnitedHealth Group executive vice president and chief of medical affairs. “Here in Washington, only two percent of people with insurance living in the neighborhood around Unity Health Center Congress Heights Center have been tested for bad cholesterol levels over the past 12 months. PEACE of Heart aims to change this disheartening statistic.”

This weekend’s screenings in Washington and Maryland are being held in conjunction with the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation’s Annual Legislative Conference and championed by Representative Danny K. Davis (D-IL).

“Every year, we lose far too many family members and loved ones to cardiovascular disease and stroke. We know that preventive screenings can save lives. It is important that each of us join the battle to combat heart disease in our families and our communities,” said Representative Davis.

**Screenings will be held Sept. 26 at Unity Health Center Congress Heights (SE Washington) and Suitland Health and Wellness Center (Suitland, Md.) from 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

**On Saturday Sept. 27, a screening will be held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center from 10:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Summary data from screenings in Atlanta and Chicago show that 43 percent of participants are overweight or obese and about 20 percent have high blood pressure. PEACE of Heart will also screen people in Miami, New Orleans and New York.

“The PEACE of Heart screening at Unity Health Center Congress Heights gives people living in our community the chance to find out if they are at risk for heart disease. The tests are simple, quick, and can save someone’s life,” said Vincent A. Keane, president and CEO at Unity Health Center. “We also will use the screening as an opportunity to let people know that we are here for all their health needs. Everyone should have a ‘medical home’ and our clinic is able to meet that need.”

The campaign also includes outreach to approximately 20,000 physicians in the six screening cities to encourage the use of clinical evidence in detecting, treating and preventing heart-related health issues.

The campaign will work to identify people at risk in underserved communities in six cities through free screenings at community health centers selected with the help of the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). LabCorp®, another of the campaign’s partners, will test cholesterol and blood glucose levels at no cost to participants.

The campaign partners are:

- [American Heart Association \(AHA\)](#)
- [Association of Black Cardiologists](#)
- [LabCorp®](#)
- [National Association of Community Health Centers](#)
- [National Medical Association](#)
- [National Minority Quality Forum](#)
- [RainbowPUSH Coalition](#)
- [United Health Foundation](#)
- [UnitedHealth Group](#) (NYSE: UNH)

As a result of a high prevalence of hypertension, African Americans have a 1.5 times greater rate of heart disease death and 1.8 times greater rate of fatal stroke than Caucasians, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). Heart disease, stroke and all other cardiovascular diseases account for 33 percent of deaths among African American males and 38 percent of deaths among African American females, according to recent statistics cited by the AHA.

###