

For Immediate Release  
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## **Nearly 20,000 Coachella Valley residents have heart disease and almost 12,000 have suffered a heart attack**

*The leading cause of death in the United States is heart disease, a health condition that also impacts the Coachella Valley. HARC data has uncovered that about 6.4% of the local adult population has heart disease—roughly 19,456 people. Additionally, about 3.9% of the population, or 11,856 adults, have suffered a heart attack. **This Press Release provides more information about heart disease and how you can prevent this chronic health condition.***

***Palm Desert, CA (February 1, 2018)*** — Now that February is here, many people will begin reaching out to their loved ones in the spirit of Valentine’s day. Another important aspect of February is that it marks the beginning of the national health observance known as American Heart Month. Considering that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, the month of February can serve as a reminder to prioritize the health of you and your loved ones.

### ***What is Heart Disease?***

Heart disease includes a variety of heart conditions that impact the functioning of the heart. Some types of heart disease include irregular heartbeats, abnormal heart pumping, issues with the arteries, structural defects, and the most common—coronary artery disease. Depending on the type of condition, the heart will be affected in different ways. For example, coronary artery disease is an event in which the blood vessels are constricted and/or blocked and is typically the main cause of a heart attack.

Common signs of coronary artery disease include chest pain, and discomfort or pressure in the chest. Sometimes, the discomfort may be felt in other areas of the body such as the shoulders, arm, neck, jaw, and back. Unfortunately, it is also possible to not have any signs or symptoms of coronary heart disease until the person experiences a heart attack or heart failure. Heart attack symptoms are similar to coronary artery disease.

## ***Prevention***

As mentioned, heart disease is a broad umbrella term, used to capture many different types of health-related conditions of the heart. However, there are a few conditions and behaviors to have on the radar for preventing heart disease. Some of these risk factors for getting heart disease include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes. When looking at Coachella Valley figures presented by HARC, 34.0% (103,884 adults) have high blood pressure, 27.5% (83,289 adults) have high cholesterol, and 12.8% (39,039 adults) have diabetes. Clearly, prioritizing heart health is a concern that many people in our local community should have.

For heart health, some unhealthy behaviors to avoid include poor eating habits, a lack of physical activity, being overweight, smoking tobacco, and drinking too much. In the Coachella Valley, about 15.1% (45,965 adults) eat out at least seven times a month, 34.8% (106,397 adults) get none or only one to two days of aerobic activity, 70.3% (214,195 adults) get none or only one to two days of anaerobic activity, 64.3% (186,952) are not at a healthy weight, 14.7% (45,066 adults) smoke cigarettes, and 11.4% (34,718 adults) drank alcohol each day, for two or more weeks in the past month. Having a family history of heart disease is also a contributing risk factor, so those with a family history should be particularly mindful of their health behaviors.

Fortunately, with the exception of family history, all of these risk factors are controllable. That is, to reduce chances of acquiring certain types of heart disease, you should stay within healthy weight ranges, get physical activity, avoid tobacco, manage stress, and aim for healthy nutrition choices. Healthy nutrition choices include foods that are fat-free or low in fat (including fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids), fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Certain foods should also be avoided including red meat and foods/drinks that are high in sugar, sodium, and trans fats.

To see more statistics on heart disease and other major diseases in the Coachella Valley, you can visit: <http://survey.HARCdata.org>

**To schedule an interview** with Dr. Jenna LeComte-Hinely call 760.404.1945 or email [Jlecomte-hinely@HARCdata.org](mailto:Jlecomte-hinely@HARCdata.org).

## **About HARC**

HARC is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization based in Palm Desert, CA. To learn more about HARC, visit [www.HARCdata.org](http://www.HARCdata.org)