



**Heart Rhythm Society**<sup>SM</sup>

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HEART RHYTHM SOCIETY AND ASSOCIATION OF BLACK CARDIOLOGISTS LAUNCH  
10-CITY “ARREST THE RISK” INITIATIVE TO EDUCATE AFRICAN AMERICANS ABOUT  
DEADLY IMPACT OF SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST**

*Local Outreach in At-Risk Communities Aims to Raise Awareness of SCA and Help Prevent  
Heart Condition Disproportionately Impacting African Americans*

**Washington, D.C. – Feb. 5, 2013** – During February Heart Health Month, the Heart Rhythm Society (HRS) and the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) are urging consumers, particularly African Americans, to “Arrest The Risk.” Responsible for more than 350,000 U.S. deaths each year, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. Approximately 95 percent of SCA cases result in death; however, it is proven most deadly in African Americans. To help reduce the incidence of SCA among African Americans, HRS and ABC are announcing a 10-city initiative to educate at-risk communities and provide resources regarding risk factors and recommended treatments to prevent SCA.

HRS and ABC are working with healthcare providers and African American community leaders in 10 cities with at-risk populations including Atlanta; Chicago; Dallas; Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; Jackson, Miss.; Nashville, Tenn.; Detroit; and Oakland, Calif.

As a part of this initiative, HRS has developed an SCA risk assessment tool, available at [www.ArrestTheRisk.org](http://www.ArrestTheRisk.org). The tool provides a means for patients to ask self-reflective questions about personal and family health issues, as well as start a dialogue with a physician about SCA risks. Physicians may refer patients to specialists, including electrophysiologists, for further evaluation and to discuss prevention options.

“Lack of knowledge and access to appropriate treatment are two of the biggest factors leading to the deadly impact of SCA among African Americans. When it comes to SCA, early intervention can literally save lives,” said Dr. Kevin L. Thomas, MD, F.A.C.C. Clinical Cardiac Electrophysiology, Division of Cardiovascular Disease, Duke University Medical Center. “It’s critical to talk to your doctor about SCA risk factors including your family’s heart health history. February as Heart Health Month is a good reminder to make an appointment with your doctor to examine your risk and discuss

preventative treatment options.”

A national survey released in October by HRS indicates lack of awareness and treatment of SCA puts African Americans at greater risk of death from the condition. Ninety-percent of African Americans say their doctor has never talked to them about SCA. In addition, though treatment guidelines recommend implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) as the standard of care for patients at risk for SCA, studies show that the use of these devices and other innovative cardiovascular technologies are less common among African Americans. As a result, a large percentage of high-risk patients are not receiving these treatments, leading to a greater likelihood of death.

“Sudden cardiac arrest is one of many heart-related conditions that disproportionately impacts African Americans,” said Ola Akinboboye, MD, MPH, MBA, President, ABC. “Since SCA can happen to people of all ages and health conditions, campaigns like “Arrest the Risk” serve to educate and remind all of us about the importance of being an informed patient. There are steps people can take to reduce their risk of experiencing SCA. Don’t wait – talk to your doctor.”

Launched in October 2012, the “Arrest the Risk” campaign aims to reduce the inequalities in SCA incidents amongst African Americans and increase the dialogue between patients and physicians. The initiative is designed to overcome the barriers to proper diagnosis and treatment of SCA through educational resources, an SCA risk assessment available on [ArrestTheRisk.org](http://ArrestTheRisk.org), as well as a powerful public service announcement featuring Shaun Robinson, Emmy-award winning journalist and weekend co-anchor and correspondent for "Access Hollywood.”

### **About the Heart Rhythm Society**

The Heart Rhythm Society is the international leader in science, education and advocacy for cardiac arrhythmia professionals and patients, and the primary information resource on heart rhythm disorders. Its mission is to improve the care of patients by promoting research, education and optimal health care policies and standards. Incorporated in 1979 and based in Washington, DC, it has a membership of more than 5,100 heart rhythm professionals in more than 72 countries around the world. [www.hrsonline.org](http://www.hrsonline.org).

### **About the Association of Black Cardiologists**

Founded in 1974, the Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc. (ABC) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to champion the elimination of cardiovascular disease disparities among minorities through education, research and advocacy. The ABC is comprised of an international membership of 2,500 medical professionals, community health advocates, corporations and institutions that fund innovative research, promote stronger public policies and provide lifesaving tools to prevent and treat cardiovascular diseases. To learn more or to get involved, visit [www.abc cardio.org](http://www.abc cardio.org).

### **About the Survey**

In August 2012, the Heart Rhythm Society worked with Ipsos Healthcare to conduct a 20-minute online survey of more than 1,500 adult consumers and 300 physicians in the U.S. A representative sample of Caucasian, African American and Hispanic consumers were surveyed, as well as a sample of three types of physicians– primary care physicians (PCPs) including those in general practice, family practice and internal medicine; cardiologists; and electrophysiologists (EPs), who are cardiac arrhythmia specialists. The survey aimed to help HRS identify current awareness levels and perceptions of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA).

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