



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Ruth Hassell-Thompson

## Senator Hassell-Thompson Reminds Women to Check Their Heart Health February 1-7

RUTH HASSELL-THOMPSON February 1, 2010

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### *Heart Disease is the #1 Killer of Women in NYS*

(Albany, NY) Heart disease is the number one killer of women in New York State and across the nation. More than 70,000 New Yorkers die each year from this disease. According to the Women's Heart Foundation, heart disease refers to diseases of the heart and blood vessel system, such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure, stroke, chest pain (also called "angina"), and rheumatic heart disease.

In order to remind women of this important health issue, Women's Heart Week was designed as a program to encourage heart health screenings, promote "prevention, education, symptom awareness and early intervention".

"It is critical that women know how to recognize the following symptoms of heart disease. Being aware can literally make the difference between life and death," Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson explained.

"Additionally, by making subtle lifestyle changes we can actually take steps toward heart health so we never enter that danger zone."

*Some symptoms of heart disease include:*

- Pain, pressure, fullness, discomfort or squeezing in the center of the chest
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Stabbing chest pain
- Radiating pain to shoulder(s), neck, back, arm(s) or jaw

- Pounding heartbeats (palpitations) or feeling extra heartbeats

*Easy steps women can immediately take to build heart health include:*

- Starting a daily exercise calendar that includes designated activities, such as walking, stretches at work after lunch, and catching up on gardening and housework.
- Practicing deep breathing and relaxation exercises to avoid stress.
- Staying away from smoke-filled environments.
- Becoming a leaner cook: switch from whole milk to skim; use egg substitute or egg whites instead of whole eggs; learn baking tricks, such as using cocoa powder instead of baking chocolate.
- Following recommendations set forth by the National Cancer Institute and eating at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day.

Less than one-third of U.S. adults get regular leisure-time physical activity (light or moderate activity that lasts 30 minutes or more, five times a week); about 10 percent of adults have no physical activity at all in their leisure time.

“All too often, women are juggling work, family and care giving responsibilities, and as a result, they place the needs of others above their own. Sadly, this can become a deadly habit, but making a few changes in one’s eating and exercise routine can make all the difference,” said Senator Hassell-Thompson.

Senator Hassell-Thompson encourages women to learn more about their own risk for heart disease, and what they can do to stay healthy, by visiting:

[http://www.womensheart.org/content/HeartAttack/heart\\_attack\\_symptoms\\_risks.asp](http://www.womensheart.org/content/HeartAttack/heart_attack_symptoms_risks.asp)

