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NATION'S LEADING PREVENTIVE HEALTH GROUPS SEEK TO SAVE LIVES BY TRANSFORMING AMERICANS' APPROACH TO HEALTH

-- American College of Preventive Medicine and Partnership for Prevention Take Aim at Preventing Heart Disease, America's Number-One Killer --

Washington, D.C. – February 11, 2008 – The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) and Partnership for Prevention (Partnership) have joined forces to change the way Americans approach their health, from costly disease treatment to cost-effective disease prevention. The organizations have targeted heart disease, the nation's number one killer, with a number of initiatives, including the announcement of a new project designed to increase doctor-patient discussions about the role of aspirin in reducing the risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack and stroke.

“Heart disease will cost America about \$450 billion this year,”¹ said Mike Parkinson, MD, FACPM, MPH, president of the American College of Preventive Medicine. “Heart disease is preventable and there are very important steps people can take – but aren't taking – to prevent heart disease from occurring in the first place like improved diet, exercise and stopping smoking. One inexpensive but effective way of reducing the risk of heart attack for people at increased risk is to take a doctor-recommended low-dose aspirin, but studies show aspirin is underutilized by people who would benefit.”²

The initiative, which targets both consumers and healthcare professionals, includes “Heart Healthy Texas,” a consumer-focused event to provide people with the most current information about preventing heart disease. It also includes the announcement of a pilot study to test the effectiveness of professional and patient tools designed to promote better dialogue about the role of aspirin in reducing the risk of cardiovascular events, ultimately resulting in improved health through the broader, appropriate use of aspirin.

“Our goal is to reach both patients and healthcare providers with important information about the easiest and most cost-effective ways to prevent heart disease and to facilitate dialogue about the importance of aspirin in preventing cardiovascular events,” noted Eduardo Sanchez, MD, MPH, former commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, director of the Institute for Health Policy at the University of Texas School of Public Health, and chair of the Partnership’s National Commission on Prevention Priorities. “Our hope is that the aspirin therapy education program can be a model for how to improve the uptake of other preventive services.”

“Heart Healthy Texas” and the pilot study are supported in part by educational grants from Bayer HealthCare.

ACPM and Partnership Studies Show Increased Aspirin Use Would Save Lives

The organizations’ efforts are a response to several recent reports suggesting that better use of preventive strategies could save thousands of lives each year.

An August 2007 report by the Partnership calculated that 45,000 lives would be saved each year if more adults took a low-dose aspirin to prevent CV events.³ The report, “Preventive Care: A National Profile on Use, Disparities, and Health Benefits,” was funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the WellPoint Foundation. It reaffirms a prior Partnership report which rated aspirin counseling as among the highest value preventive health services that, if optimized, would dramatically contribute to improved public health.

“The data are extraordinary,” observed Dr. Sanchez. “If more people at risk for heart attack were on a simple and inexpensive doctor-recommended aspirin regimen, fewer people would die from heart disease. Period.”

Underutilization of aspirin is a significant public health concern. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2005 only 40 percent of men 40 years and older and women 50 years and older were using aspirin on a daily basis.³

A recent ACPM report published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* also reported underutilization of aspirin. In addition, the report showed that the factor most strongly associated

with aspirin use was a conversation about aspirin with a healthcare provider: aspirin use was 88% among respondents reporting such a discussion, compared to 17% for those who did not report a discussion. The report, which was based on a nationwide online survey of 1,299 adults ages 40 and older, revealed that aspirin is greatly underutilized, with 43% of increased-risk respondents saying they do not take aspirin regularly.²

“There is a clear correlation between having a conversation with a healthcare provider about the role of aspirin in preventing cardiovascular events and actually using aspirin to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke,” said Dr. Parkinson. “The efforts by ACPM and Partnership aim to promote awareness and dialogue between patients and their healthcare providers about cardiovascular prevention strategies, including healthy behaviors and the potential role of aspirin therapy.”

About the American College of Preventive Medicine

The American College of Preventive Medicine is the national professional society for physicians committed to disease prevention and health promotion. Its mission is to serve as the leader for the specialty of preventive medicine, which encompasses general preventive medicine, public health, occupational and environmental medicine, and aerospace medicine. ACPM seeks to improve population health status through evidence-based disease prevention and health promotion research, policies, practices, and programs. More information is available at www.acpm.org.

About Partnership for Prevention

Partnership for Prevention is a nationally recognized nonprofit membership organization made up of organizations dedicated to advancing policies and practices to prevent disease and improve the health of all Americans. Partnership’s members include voluntary health associations, medical and public health organizations, businesses, government agencies and academic institutions. More information about Partnership for Prevention is available at <http://www.prevent.org>.

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¹ Rosamond W, Flegal K, Furie K, et al. Heart disease and stroke statistics 2008 update: a report from the American Heart Association Statistics Committee and Stroke Statistics Subcommittee. *Circulation* 2008;117 (Page 13).

² Pignone M, Anderson GK, Binns K, et al. Aspirin use among adults over 40 in the U.S.: results of a national survey. *Am J Prev Med* 2007;32(5):403-407.

³ National Commission on Prevention Priorities. *Preventive Care: A National Profile on Use, Disparities, and Health Benefits*. Partnership for Prevention, August 2007. Available at: <http://www.prevent.org/content/view/129/72/>.