February is American Heart Month and is a good time to make healthy commitments to improve your health and well-being. Small changes daily changes such as drinking an extra glass of water, taking the steps instead of the elevator, getting an extra 30-minute of sleep each night, or using balsamic vinegar instead of Caesar salad dressing can all lead to positive results. Another way you can make a positive change is to be informed about your health. Resources such as Consumer Health Complete, a consumer-friendly database provided by PA Power Library, can help you find overviews, treatments, and articles on health conditions, diseases, and medications. This resource is free to use at the library and remotely with an active library card. It has helped people prepare for doctor’s appointments and take control of their health.

How Can Libraries Make a Difference? Pennsylvania Libraries can use this month to raise awareness about heart disease and how people can prevent it. Libraries can implement these simple ideas to encourage healthy hearts and healthy living to your community! Here are some ideas:

Get Involved
Take action to promote heart health.

1. Celebrate National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about women and heart disease. Encourage your library staff to wear red on February 3, 2017. Take a picture of your staff wearing red and send the photo along with a short write-up about the commitment of your staff to raise awareness for American Heart Month and National Wear Red Day to local media to print in the newspaper or online.

2. Check out the PA Forward “Recipes for Success” and the program called “Engage for Health”. This program is located here: https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.palibraries.org/resource/collection/BC2E629F-AEF9-4E90-BF95-00A7EC200B77/Preview_Health_Literacy_Recipes.pdf. Engage for health is a consumer health program that informs and encourages the general public to take an active role in their health care and learn to ask questions to promote better care and communication with their health professionals.

3. As a partner of PA Forward, the Hospital and Health System Association of Pennsylvania is a great resource for libraries. This organization is a liaison with the PA hospitals and can help libraries locate a community health educator that can work on programs with them. In addition, they have recently launched a new online community to promote healthy living. Healthy Me PA is an opportunity for libraries to share positive health information with their patrons. You can find ways to promote this online resource. Check out the website at www.healthymepa.com

4. Get active! Host a 20-minute group walk around your office at lunchtime

How can We Help Spread the Word?
We've made it easier for you to make a difference. Take action starting today!

- Add information about health literacy and living a heart healthy lifestyle to your newsletter.
• Post about American Heart Month and the importance of Health Literacy!
Examples: Worried about your blood pressure? Here are some questions you can ask your doctor during your next visit: http://1.usa.gov/1wGp3ta #healthliteracy #paforward

Did you know? Your heart age can be older than your actual age. Take the heart age quiz to learn yours. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvOU4Do4xZ8 #healthliteracy #paforward

Take small steps toward preventing heart disease & stroke, like eating better & exercising. Little things do add up! https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/healthy_living.htm #healthliteracy #paforward

• Host a community event where families can be active while learning about local health resources.

Find More Information

• The American Heart Association
American Heart Month Sponsor
• About Heart Disease
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• Quit Smoking
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
• Heart Health and Stroke
Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health
• Heart and Vascular Diseases
National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute
• The Heart Truth Campaign
National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute
• Keep the Beat: Deliciously Health Eating
National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
• Keep the Beat: Delicious Heart-Healthy Latino Recipes (Spanish/English) [PDF - 2.82MB]
National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute
• Heart Attack: What is a Heart Attack?
National Institutes of Health, National Institute On Aging
• High Blood Cholesterol: What is High Blood Cholesterol?
National Institutes of Health, National Institute On Aging
• High Blood Pressure: What is High Blood Pressure?
National Institutes of Health, National Institute On Aging
• Aspirin for Reducing Your Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke: Know the Facts
U.S. Food and Drug Administration