

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE



# Cardiovascular disease community calls for tougher targets to curb global risk

## Leaders in cardiovascular disease prevention and control publish paper calling for urgent action to reduce premature mortality by 25 per cent by 2025

**Embargoed: 00:01 CEST, September 18, 2012**

*Geneva, 18 September 2012* – Agreement by governments, by the end of 2012, on a set of ambitious global targets to curb the growing scourge of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which includes cardiovascular disease (CVD; heart disease and stroke), is critical to avoiding the millions of premature deaths worldwide. This, according to a new paper published by the Global Cardiovascular Disease Taskforce a group of eminent experts who represent five leading heart-health organizations.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the second ever United Nations High-Level Meeting on a health-related issue – NCDs – the Taskforce is calling on governments and the CVD community to accelerate progress on the commitments made at this landmark event by supporting 10 evidence-based targets. CVD is the leading cause of death worldwide, killing 17.3 million people a year and making up nearly half of the 36 million NCD deaths. Around 80 per cent of these deaths are in low- and middle-income countries where human and financial resources are most limited to address them. The number of CVD deaths is expected to rise to 23.6 million by 2030.

As a first step, a global target to reduce premature deaths from NCDs, 25 per cent by 2025 was agreed at the 65th World Health Assembly in Geneva this past May. However, as the Global CVD Taskforce suggests, additional targets developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) are key to achieving this overarching goal. These include curbing physical inactivity, tobacco consumption, salt intake and hypertension.

“The number of people with CVD is growing and its impact is disproportionately felt by those in the developing world, where people die younger; we now have the opportunity of a lifetime to stem its rise with concerted international action that will help countries tackle the preventable causes of CVD,” said Dr Sidney C. Smith, Jr (World Heart Federation President and Chair of the writing group).

“Cardiovascular disease risk can be lowered by public policies that help people to make healthier choices. This set of robust targets can focus governments’ efforts on this vital task and make progress measurable,” said Dr Ralph Sacco, Past President of the American Heart Association.

“In addition to policies that aid in prevention, it is also paramount that those living with CVD and at risk of developing CVD have access to prevention and rehabilitation services, including affordable and simple medical treatments”, said Dr Hans Stam, President of the European Heart Network.

With CVD costing governments nearly US\$863 billion globally, the Taskforce recommends the uptake of a set of interventions designed by the WHO and designated as “best buys” – cost-effective treatments that can be delivered regardless of the income level of a country. These include the widespread adoption of multidrug therapies that could save nearly 18 million lives over a 10-year period, at a cost of just over a dollar a day.

“The treatments are out there, and they are feasible and cost-effective; we need to make them available and affordable around the globe for a healthier outcome”, said Dr William A. Zoghbi, President of the American College of Cardiology. “The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) has recently made a call for governments to implement population-level changes, such as taxation and regulation of advertising” said Professor Robert Ferrari, ESC Past President. “Up to 50% of deaths

from CVD in Europe could be avoided by making the environment healthier, in order to nudge individuals in the right direction,” added the ESC Secretary and Treasurer, Professor David Wood.

The CVD Taskforce paper is released ahead of World Heart Day on September 29, when supporters worldwide will rally for healthy homes and countries, with a particular focus on the lesser known CVD risks for women and children.

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### **Notes to editors:**

About the Global Cardiovascular Disease Taskforce

The Global Cardiovascular Disease Taskforce calls on the CVD community to endorse and support the top four exposure targets on physical activity, tobacco, dietary salt intake and hypertension, with an aim to achieve, by 2025:

- A 10 per cent relative reduction in prevalence of insufficient physical activity in adults aged 18+ years
- A 30 per cent relative reduction in prevalence of current tobacco smoking
- A 30 per cent relative reduction in mean adult (aged 18+) population intake of salt, with aim of achieving recommended level of less than 5 grams per day
- A 25 per cent relative reduction in prevalence of raised blood pressure

Other proposed targets to help reduce the burden of CVD, and for which the Taskforce is advocating, include those on fat intake (saturated and trans-fatty acids), cholesterol, obesity, excessive alcohol intake as well as drug therapy and essential medicines to prevent and treat CVD.

The Taskforce is led by the World Heart Federation and is a collaboration between: American Heart Association, American College of Cardiology Foundation, European Society of Cardiology and European Heart Network.

The CVD Taskforce paper can be downloaded via the journal Global Heart. The position paper will also be published simultaneously in the journals of the Taskforce members: Circulation, European Heart Journal, Journal of the American College of Cardiology.

### **About the World Heart Federation**

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against heart disease and stroke, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries, via a united community of more than 200 member organizations. With its members, the World Heart Federation works to build global commitment to addressing cardiovascular health at the policy level, generates and exchanges ideas, shares best practice, advances scientific knowledge and promotes knowledge transfer to tackle cardiovascular disease – the world’s number one killer. It is a growing membership organization that brings together the strength of cardiac societies and heart foundations from more than 100 countries. Through our collective efforts we can help people all over the world to lead longer and better heart-healthy lives. For more information, please visit: [www.worldheart.org](http://www.worldheart.org); [twitter.com/worldheartfed](https://twitter.com/worldheartfed); [facebook.com/worldheartfederation](https://facebook.com/worldheartfederation).

### **About the American Heart Association**

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke - America's No. 1 and No. 4 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) or call any of our offices around the country.

**About the American College of Cardiology**

The mission of the American College of Cardiology is to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health. The College is a 40,000-member nonprofit medical society comprised of physicians, surgeons, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists and practice managers, and bestows credentials upon cardiovascular specialists who meet its stringent qualifications. The College is a leader in the formulation of health policy, standards and guidelines, and is a staunch supporter of cardiovascular research. The ACC provides professional education and operates national registries for the measurement and improvement of quality care. More information about the association is available online at [www.cardiosource.org/ACC](http://www.cardiosource.org/ACC).

**About the European Heart Network**

The European Heart Network (EHN) is a Brussels-based alliance of heart foundations and likeminded non-governmental organisations throughout Europe, with member organisations in 26 countries. The EHN plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular diseases, in particular heart disease and stroke, through advocacy, networking, education and patient support, so that they are no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe. For more information, please visit [www.ehnheart.org](http://www.ehnheart.org).

**About the European Society of Cardiology**

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) represents more than 75,000 cardiology professionals across Europe and the Mediterranean. Its mission is to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe. For more information, please visit [www.escardio.org](http://www.escardio.org).