

# **Promoting Women's Heart Health: A Strategic Communication Campaign for UF Health**

## **Introduction**

Heart health issues are a significant concern for women, with prevalence rates steadily increasing over the years. Contrary to popular belief, heart disease does not only affect men; it poses a substantial threat to women, too. In 2021, heart disease claimed the lives of nearly 37.59 women for every 100,000 females in Alachua County, highlighting its ongoing prominence as a leading cause of death in Florida (Florida Department of Health, 2023).

Moreover, while heart disease ranks as the leading cause of death among women in the U.S., it's even more concerning that research indicates that approximately only half of women are aware that it is their leading cause of death (CDC, 2023). With such a significant knowledge gap regarding heart disease, including its warning signs and risk factors, raising awareness and educating on this critical issue becomes imperative.

It's also important to recognize that some heart disease symptoms and risk factors differ between women and men. For instance, certain risk factors, including obesity, metabolic syndrome, and depression, are more prevalent in women (The Office on Women's Health, 2017). Additionally, women face unique risk factors, such as menopause, which can impact heart health. Moreover, some well-known heart disease risk factors, such as diabetes and smoking, pose even greater dangers for women.

These disparities underscore the critical need to raise awareness about heart disease, its unique aspects in women, and the importance of early detection and prevention.

## **Rationale for a Strategic Communication Campaign**

Developing a strategic communication campaign focused on women's heart health aligns with UF Health's commitment to community well-being and health care excellence. Several compelling reasons support this initiative:

- **Health Equity:** A women's heart health campaign addresses gender disparities in cardiovascular care, promoting health equity by raising awareness, improving diagnosis, and enhancing access to appropriate treatment.
- **Preventative Focus:** Focusing on women's heart health allows UF Health to promote preventative measures that can reduce the overall burden of cardiovascular diseases, benefiting not only women but also their families and communities.
- **Community Engagement:** A strategic campaign can foster community engagement and collaboration. UF Health can partner with local organizations, schools, and community centers to reach women of all ages and backgrounds.

## Identified Key Publics for the Campaign

- **Women Patients:** The primary target audience for UF Health's campaign are our female patients. This includes young adults, middle-aged adults, and senior citizens. Tailoring messages and strategies to each age group is essential to maximize impact.
- **Health care Professionals:** Engaging health care providers, especially primary care providers and gynecologists, is crucial. These providers can serve as intermediaries in disseminating information, conducting risk assessments, and promoting preventive measures.
- **Community Partners and Advocacy Groups:** Collaborating with local community organizations, women's advocacy groups, and schools is essential to extend the campaign's reach. These partners can help organize events, workshops, and awareness programs within their networks.

## American Heart Month

Launching the campaign during February, which coincides with American Heart Month, provides a timely and relevant platform to raise awareness of women's heart health. American Heart Month is dedicated to promoting heart health and preventing heart disease, making it the perfect backdrop for UF Health's campaign. By aligning with this nationwide observance, UF Health can leverage the increased public attention and media coverage surrounding heart health issues during this month, ultimately amplifying the impact of its campaign.

In conclusion, UF Health has a unique opportunity to make a significant impact by developing a strategic communication campaign centered around women's heart health, launching it during February's American Heart Month. By addressing the prevalence of heart health issues in women, UF Health can contribute to promoting health equity, saving lives, and fostering community engagement.

## References

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