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RISING DIABETES RATES PROMPT RENEWED EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION OF RELATED HEART DISEASE AND STROKE

Leading Health Groups Issue Call to Action During American Diabetes Month

ALEXANDRIA, VA (November 8, 2005) – At least one in five Americans has or is at serious risk for developing diabetes, meaning millions are at an increased risk for cardiovascular disease, key health organizations are warning. New figures released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have caused serious concern among leading health groups, including the American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the American College of Cardiology (ACC), and the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP). The groups are collaborating during November – American Diabetes Month – to emphasize the link between diabetes and related cardiovascular complications.

The CDC revealed last week in its biannual report on diabetes that 20.8 million Americans are now living with diabetes, a 14 percent increase from the 18.2 million the CDC reported in 2003. Another 41 million have pre-diabetes, the condition that indicates an increased risk for developing both type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. It is estimated that heart disease and stroke kill two out of three people with diabetes.

“These alarming new national statistics underscore the need for broader efforts to educate the American public about diabetes and its close relationship with cardiovascular disease,” said Robert Rizza, M.D., President, American Diabetes Association and Director for Research, Mayo Medical College, Rochester, Minn. “Research has shown that diabetes puts adults with diabetes at great risk for heart disease and stroke. A comprehensive diabetes care plan can help reduce these risks, but clearly more work is needed to educate people with diabetes on the proper steps to take.”

The report also indicates that the prevalence of diabetes in ethnic populations continues to rise, heightening concerns about health disparities among minority populations. Diabetes affects about 3.2 million African Americans adults, up from 2.7 million in 2003, and 2.5 million Latino Americans adults, up from 2.0 million in 2003. About 13.3 percent of African Americans, 9.5 percent of Latino Americans and 8.4 percent of Caucasians aged 20 or over are estimated to have diabetes.

“Rising and disproportionate rates of diabetes among minorities is a challenge that demands the attention of all educators,” said James R. Gavin III, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine, Emory

University and former chair, National Diabetes Education Program. “Ethnic populations are not only at higher risk for having diabetes, but also are more likely to develop serious diabetes complications that could lead to disability or death. The challenge for educators and clinicians today is providing patients with the best tools and empowering them with the knowledge that they can control their diabetes and prevent its complications.”

Research has shown that people with diabetes can reduce their risk for cardiovascular complications by managing their blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure and cholesterol. Approximately 73 percent of adults with diabetes have high blood pressure and most have cholesterol levels that put them at increased risk for cardiovascular disease.

In an effort to educate people with diabetes about the key components of diabetes care, NDEP, ADA, and ACC urge patients to talk with their health care providers about the “ABCs of Diabetes:” A is for the A1C test, which measures average blood glucose over the past 2 to 3 months; B is for blood pressure; and C is for cholesterol. People with diabetes need to ask their health care providers what their numbers are and what steps are required to reach their target goals.

Recommended ABC Targets:

- **A1C** - less than 7 percent. Check at least twice a year.
- **Blood pressure** - below 130/80. Check at every doctor’s visit.
- **Cholesterol (LDL)** - below 100. Check at least once a year.

The same steps are necessary to manage blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol: make wise food choices, engage in daily physical activity and take prescribed medications. People with diabetes should also avoid smoking and consult their health providers about taking aspirin.

ADA and ACC have developed a new diabetes survival guide called “Choose to Live” to give people with diabetes information they need to help reduce diabetes-related complications such as heart disease and stroke. This free comprehensive resource is available by calling 1-800-DIABETES. NDEP promotes the “ABCs of Diabetes” in its *Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes* campaign. NDEP educational materials are available in English, Spanish and 15 Asian and Pacific Islander languages at www.ndep.nih.gov.

For more information on the link between diabetes and heart disease, contact the ADA at 1-800-DIABETES or visit www.diabetes.org/MakeTheLink; or contact NDEP at 1-800-438-5383 or www.ndep.nih.gov.

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The American Diabetes Association is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy. Founded in 1940, the Association has offices in every region of the country, providing services to hundreds of communities.

The American College of Cardiology, a 30,000-member nonprofit professional medical society and teaching institution, is the leading organization dedicated to being an advocate for quality cardiovascular care.

The National Diabetes Education Program, the leading federal government source of information about diabetes prevention and control, is sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and 200 public and private partners.