



**For immediate release  
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**American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association assisting victims of Hurricane Katrina**  
*Organizations to contribute \$1 million to help restore health care in ravaged areas*

The volunteers and staff of the American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association are deeply saddened by the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and extend their thoughts and prayers to all those who have been affected by the tragedy.

In order to meet the critical need of restoring healthcare to communities affected by the hurricane, the organizations will jointly contribute \$1 million to the Bush Clinton Katrina Fund to help get hospitals, healthcare systems and the patient support services in the devastated areas up and running again. The organizations hope that their support will help ensure that those patients who have cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or who suffer strokes will continue to receive the quality healthcare they need during this crisis and beyond.

The organizations decided to make this contribution based on the reports about damage to many healthcare facilities, depletion of drugs and medical supplies, the increasing demands on healthcare systems from patients requiring immediate medical attention, as well as the need for ongoing access to care over the long-term. In addition, all three of the organizations have volunteers and staff in the region who are working to restore and continue the patient services and programs that help those suffering from these chronic diseases.

"During a crisis like this, people who have a chronic disease like heart disease, diabetes, cancer or stroke are among the most vulnerable. We want to be sure that every patient in the devastated areas gets the care that they need and deserve," said M. Cass Wheeler, CEO, American Heart Association. "Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama already face death rates from cardiovascular disease that are significantly higher than most other states in the U.S. And during crises like this, it can be difficult or even impossible to get the immediate care you need if you have a heart attack or stroke. We need to do everything we can to ensure that the problems caused by Katrina don't edge those death rates even higher."

"Our citizens along the Gulf Coast are already disproportionately affected by diabetes so it is critical that we take immediate action to restore health care to prevent any further deterioration to the health status of a population that was already in danger. There are immediate health care needs, but we also need to be prepared to address the significant long-

term health needs that these people will face over the next few days, weeks, and months,” said Lynn B. Nicholas, FACHE, CEO, American Diabetes Association.

“In response to this tragedy, the American Cancer Society is showing its support to those cancer patients and their families affected by the devastation and lack of services. We are redirecting funds and we are assembling a response team to activate resources and access to treatment, housing, medication, physicians, lost medical records, and other critical needs,” said John R. Seffrin, PhD, CEO, American Cancer Society. “It is our hope that resources provided today by all of our organizations address the many needs in the uncertain days ahead.”

Although the organizations do not ordinarily provide funding for relief of natural disasters, the complete devastation by Hurricane Katrina of communities, individuals and healthcare systems is unprecedented in recent history. Therefore, the organizations felt compelled to provide immediate assistance.

The American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association collaborate on a variety of projects, including an initiative called “Everyday Choices For A Healthier Life,” a three-year advocacy, public and professional education campaign to empower Americans to help lower their risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Helpful tips and links to more information about this initiative can be found at [www.everydaychoices.org](http://www.everydaychoices.org).

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. Visit the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) or call 1-800-ACS-2345.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation’s premier voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information and advocacy. Founded in 1940, the Association’s mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. The Association’s commitment to research is reflected through its scientific meetings; education and provider recognition programs; and its Research Foundation and Nationwide Research Program, which fund breakthrough studies looking into the cure, prevention, and treatment of diabetes and its complications. Visit the American Diabetes Association at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org) or call 1-800-DIABETES (1-800-342-2383).

Since 1924, the American Heart Association has helped protect people of all ages and ethnicities from the ravages of cardiovascular disease and stroke, the nation’s No. 1 and No. 3 killers, which claim more than 927,000 Americans a year. In fiscal year 2003-04, the association invested more than \$439 million for research, professional and public education, and advocacy so people across American can live stronger, longer lives. Visit the American Heart Association at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) or call 1-800-AHA-USA1.

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