



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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American Heart Association, County Team Up to Build Culture of Health *Challenge: BP Aims to Raise Awareness and Lower Blood Pressure of Residents*

PITTSBURGH – The American Heart Association (AHA) and Allegheny County, through its *Live Well Allegheny* initiative, have partnered to present Challenge: BP. The Challenge: BP effort is designed to encourage communities, organizations and workplaces to help control high blood pressure of county residents.

“We are recruiting and working with workplaces and community based organizations to provide them with evidence-based tools and resources to empower their employees and members to take control of their blood pressure. This community-wide challenge builds the idea that we are all in this together, and that we can achieve our goals together as a community,” said Deb Banks, Executive Director of the American Heart Association, Greater Pittsburgh Region. “We are encouraging communities, organizations and workplaces to take on this challenge to live healthier, and managing your blood pressure is a good first step.”

Nearly 80 million adults have high blood pressure (HBP or hypertension). HBP has no symptoms and is often referred to as the *silent killer*. High blood pressure is one the leading risk factors of cardiovascular disease and stroke. In Allegheny County, the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease is higher than the state and national average.

“When we launched *Live Well Allegheny*, it was with the idea that our stakeholders and partners could help shape and guide the efforts that we were undertaking through their own interests and expertise. That is certainly the case with this partnership with the American Heart Association,” said County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. “Working cooperatively with the AHA and all of our stakeholders, partners, communities, schools and workplaces to talk about the need to be aware of high blood pressure and the steps that we can all take to reduce that risk is an important part of a healthy community.”

The goal of Challenge: BP is to empower participants to take ownership of their cardiovascular health, and to lower blood pressure by 10 points on average as a community.

“We know that hypertension is a leading cause of heart disease and stroke. Some of our communities are disproportionately impacted,” said Dr. Karen Hacker, Director of the Allegheny County Health Department. “This collaborative effort with the AHA will encourage communities and workplaces to participate in improving the culture of health. It’s the hallmark of the *Live Well Allegheny* campaign.”

According to the American Heart Association, a normal [blood pressure](#) is less than 120/80. While there is no cure for HBP, using medication as prescribed and making positive lifestyle changes can help enhance your quality of life and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and more.

Companies already participating in the inaugural year include Gateway Health who will be offering blood pressure management programs to their members; and Giant Eagle/Market District pharmacy locations, where you can take part in their blood pressure management programs. Other workplaces engaged in this challenge so far are CCAC, MARC USA, Teletech, Veteran Leadership Program of Western PA, all of which will be offering blood pressure management programs to their employees.

Workplaces and community organizations can sign up free of charge to participate in Challenge: BP until March 31, 2017. This challenge period is from March through November 30, 2017. A new cycle will start in 2018. The American Heart Association will provide free tools and resources to assist your group with the challenge. Participating entities will be recognized at the end of the program, and they will be able to nominate an outstanding member who made significant changes in their lifestyle to improve their health.

For more information on Challenge: BP, visit www.heart.org/Pittsburgh or www.livewellalleggheny.com. To register your organization or workplace, email the American Heart Association at ChallengeBP@heart.org

Follow the conversation and stay connected using #challengeBP, #AHAPGH and #howdoyoulivewell.

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About the American Heart Association and American Stroke Association:

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association are devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – the two leading causes of death in the world. 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 American Heart Association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About Live Well Allegheny:

Live Well Allegheny was launched in January 2014 by County Executive Rich Fitzgerald as a comprehensive, innovative strategy on wellness that embraces a broad concept of living well to include physical health, mental wellness, personal and community safety, prevention and preparedness, and much more. The effort is being led by the Board of Health and Health Department Director Dr. Karen Hacker. For more information, visit www.LiveWellAllegheny.com.

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association

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