World Heart Federation calls for heart choices, not hard choices, to reduce the world’s number one killer

2014 World Heart Day theme announced; global awareness day to take place
Monday 29 September 2014

Geneva, (6 August 2014) - The World Heart Federation is today delighted to announce the theme of World Heart Day 2014, which takes place on Monday 29th September, as **heart-healthy environments.** Heart-healthy environments have been chosen as they are an essential part of looking after your heart. Too often society ‘blames’ the individual: you smoke, you eat and drink too much, you don’t exercise. But very often people are ‘trapped’ in environments that predispose them to cardiovascular disease (CVD); for them there are limited options to choose a healthier lifestyle. In advance of World Heart Day 2014, the World Heart Federation is calling on people to sign up to the [World Heart Day petition](#) to call on national and international leaders to recognise the global burden of CVD and to prioritise the need for heart-healthy environments wherever people live, work, or play.

CVD, including heart disease and stroke, is the world’s number one killer. At least 80% of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided by controlling risk factors such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, salt intake, physical inactivity and raised blood pressure. However, many people just don’t have the options to engage in heart-healthy behaviour as a direct result of where they work, live or play.

The World Heart Federation believes everyone has the right to live, work and play in places that contribute to their heart health and wants to highlight on World Heart Day that the environments we occupy – whether at home, at work or at play – can either encourage or discourage the choices we make to be more heart healthy. For example, people who live in urban areas are often surrounded by processed food outlets in settings where both healthy foods and clean cooking options are in short supply. In addition, the health systems in many countries have not kept pace with the explosion in rates of CVD and as such, people in more rural areas do not always have access to health services to advise them on heart health or people in poorer, urban communities do not have the same opportunities or suitable places to take part in physical activities that can help keep their hearts healthy.

World Heart Day was created by the World Heart Federation in the year 2000 to inform people around the globe that heart disease and stroke are the world’s leading cause of death and to encourage people to take action to protect their heart health. It is imperative that people understand the need to take care of their heart health and they have the right environments in which to do so, as supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) ‘25by25’ goal of reducing premature mortality caused by CVD by at least 25% by the year 2025.

Over the coming months in the lead up to World Heart Day 2014, the World Heart Federation will be launching several initiatives to raise awareness of heart-healthy environments and bring the need for these to the attention of political leaders globally, with the ultimate aim being the inclusion of CVD in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Keep an eye on the World Heart Federation website or social media channels to find out more. The World Heart Federation is also proud to
partner with several organisations to support World Heart Day 2014, including BUPA, with their 8 Week Walking Challenge, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and International Sports and Culture association (ISCA) and their MOVE Week (see below for further details).

For more information on WHD 2014 please go to: www.worldheartday.org or contact the WHF at the details below. Find us on Facebook and Twitter at www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation and twitter.com/worldheartfed.

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About the World Heart Federation
The World Heart Federation is the only global advocacy and leadership organization bringing together the cardiovascular disease (CVD) community to help people everywhere lead heart-healthy lives. We strive for a world where there are at least 25% fewer premature deaths from CVD by 2025.

That’s why we and our 200+ members work courageously to end needless deaths from exposure to tobacco and other risk factors, lack of access to treatment, and neglected conditions like rheumatic heart disease which kills hundreds of thousands of children each year. Across 100 countries, 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 CVD— the world’s number one killer. World Heart Federation is at the heart of driving the CVD agenda and advocating for better heart health — enabling people to live longer, better and more heart healthy lives whoever and wherever they are.

For more information, please visit: www.worldheart.org; www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation and twitter.com/worldheartfed

About ISCA and MOVE Week
The International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) is a global platform open to organizations working within the field of sport for all, recreational sports and physical activity. Created in 1995, ISCA is today a global actor closely cooperating with its 140 member organizations, international NGOs, and public and private sector stakeholders. Its 40 million individual members from 65 countries represent a diverse group of people active within youth, sport and cultural activities. For more information go to www.worldheartday.org

About MOVE Week
MOVE Week is an annual Europe-wide event and an integral part of the NowWeMove Campaign (2012-2020). MOVE Week is about promoting the benefits of being active and participating regularly in sport and physical activity.
Across Europe, a wide range of organisations, voluntary groups, clubs and individuals, known as MOVE Agents are setting up and coordinating events for MOVE Week.

The MOVE Week Campaign is coordinated by the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA) in collaboration with the European Cyclists’ Federation (ECF). For more information, please go to www.worldheartday.org

**MOVE Week 2014** will be held from Monday 29 of September to Sunday 05 October, 2014

**About Bupa**
BUPA is a leading international healthcare group, which offers health insurance and medical subscription products and runs care homes, retirement villages, hospitals, primary care centers and dental clinics. Bupa also provides workplace health services, home healthcare, health assessments and long-term condition management services.

**About the 8 Week Walking Challenge**
The 8 Week Walking Challenge focuses on increasing physical activity, not as a one-off event but as a sustained lifestyle change. Through the challenge and encouraging individuals to walk as members of groups (virtual or real) they are more likely to sustain the activity on an ongoing basis, working towards achieving the goal of 25x25. The challenge will support and be an integral part of our World Heart Day 2014 activities and also provides a great platform to engage supporters and fundraisers to focus on heart health. The 2014 Walking Challenge aims to engage at least 10,000 individuals in five trailblazing countries and people can download the free motivational Bupa Ground Miles app for i-Phone and android phones to support them with the walking challenge. For more information go to www.worldheartday.org