



Press Toolkit



PRESS RELEASE

First-Ever National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day Set for February 22, 2017

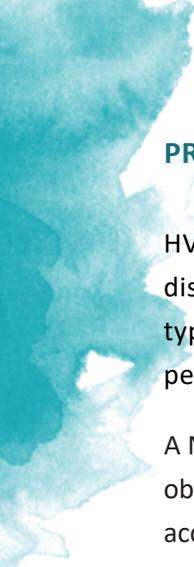
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Adds Day to Its National Health Observances Calendar; U.S. House Resolution Introduced

Washington, D.C., January 4, 2017 – Today, the Alliance for Aging Research (Alliance) announced that February 22, 2017, will serve as the first-ever National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day, with annual observances to follow. In addition, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has listed this new awareness day and an accompanying toolkit on its National Health Observances Calendar (NHO) at Healthfinder.gov. National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day is sponsored by the Alliance and supported by 29 national organizations representing patients, providers, and older adults.

This observance day is dedicated to raising awareness about heart valve disease (HVD)—its risk factors, symptoms, detection, and treatment—in order to reduce the burden of the condition. Despite the fact that more than five million Americans are affected by HVD, public awareness of the disease is shockingly low. A recent survey of more than 2,000 adults found that close to 50 percent of respondents had never heard of HVD, and only about one in four knew somewhat or a great deal about the disease.

“The life-altering seriousness of heart valve disease, combined with the fact that symptoms are often difficult to detect or dismissed as a ‘normal’ part of aging, makes the reported lack of public awareness dangerous,” says Susan Peschin, MHS, Alliance president and CEO. “We felt strongly that we needed to establish National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day with the support of our leading partners in the space, and we are grateful to HHS for listing the day on the NHO Calendar. The help of this esteemed village represents a tremendous step forward in raising awareness about this condition, improving detection and treatment, and, most importantly, saving lives.”

The awareness day was also supported through a resolution (H.Res.941) introduced by U.S. Rep. Tony Cárdenas on December 5, 2016. “The sad fact is that 22,000 people die from heart valve disease each year,” says Rep. Cárdenas (D-CA). “By introducing H.Res.941 during the 114th Congress, I hope to raise the profile of heart valve disease among all Americans and help us recognize the importance of early detection and treatment of the condition, especially in seniors.”



PRESS RELEASE CONT.

HVD consists of damage to one or more of the heart's valves; most HVD involves a damaged valve that disrupts blood flow by not opening or closing properly. While some types of HVD are not serious, other types, such as aortic stenosis, can lead to major complications—including death. An estimated 50 percent of patients with severe aortic stenosis will die within two years if they do not receive treatment.

A National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day website has been launched with information about the observance, free outreach resources, and tips on how to help spread the word. In addition, there is a Twitter account @ValveDiseaseDay featuring messaging focused on heart valve disease and the outreach efforts of partnering organizations. (The #ValveDiseaseDay hashtag will also be used to follow related outreach efforts.)

The Alliance's activities around National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day were conducted with unrestricted educational support from Edwards Lifesciences Foundation.

To celebrate the launch of the day, an event will be held on February 22; details, including time and location, will be available at the awareness day website.





ABOUT VALVE DISEASE

What is Heart Valve Disease?

As many as five million Americans have been diagnosed with heart valve disease (HVD). HVD involves damage to one or more of the heart's valves and, while some types are not serious, others can lead to major complications—including death.

Most types of HVD involve a damaged valve that disrupts blood flow by not opening or closing properly. Regurgitation is when a valve does not fully close and allows blood to leak backwards. It is also commonly called insufficiency, or a leaky valve. Stenosis is when a valve does not fully open to allow enough blood to flow through. It is also commonly called a sticky, narrowed, or stiff valve. Each of the four valves can have regurgitation or stenosis (sometimes both), although the aortic and mitral valves are most likely to be damaged.

Survey Data

A 2016 national omnibus survey of 2,018 adults revealed that, while over half of respondents said they have heard of heart valve disease (HVD), less than one in four knew somewhat or a great deal about HVD. Although awareness increases with age, 30 percent of respondents over the age of 65 said they knew nothing about HVD.

The surveying was done in collaboration with Belden Russonello Strategists, who put questions on Telephone CARAVAN, a national omnibus survey of adults randomly selected via landlines and cell phones.

The Alliance also worked with Belden Russonello Strategists to conduct an in-depth analysis to learn more about awareness levels and the experiences of HVD patients as they are diagnosed and seek treatment.



When valve damage reduces blood flow, the heart has to work harder and the body gets less oxygen—leading to a number of symptoms. However, people with valve disease do not always have symptoms, even if their disease is severe. For these people, a heart murmur is the most important clue. For those who experience symptoms, they may be dismissed as a “normal” part of aging.

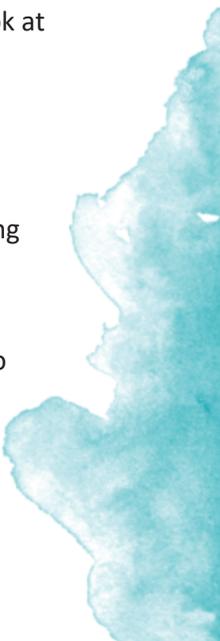
HVD can be there at birth or develop from damage later in life from calcification, other cardiovascular diseases and conditions, or infection. Fortunately, HVD can usually be successfully treated with valve repair and replacement in patients of all ages.

A survey group of more than 400 individuals diagnosed with HVD was recruited through the Harris Panel—including members of its third party panel providers. The panel provides a robust representative sample of the general U.S. population. Additionally, patient focus groups in Chicago and New York provided a qualitative look at the patient experience.

Key findings from the survey include:

- More than two thirds of the survey respondents knew a limited amount or nothing about HVD prior to their diagnosis.
- Six in 10 respondents were diagnosed with heart valve disease only because they went to see a health care professional for a regular check-up or some other issue.

Complete survey results can be found [here](#).



BACKGROUND INFORMATION



What is National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day?

National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day is an annual day dedicated to raising awareness about heart valve disease—its risk factors, symptoms, detection, and treatment—in order to reduce the burden of the disease. With education and advocacy, it is possible to reduce the number of people who lose their independence and ability to fully participate in their lives; experience heart attacks, arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, and other heart disease; suffer from strokes; and even die from the disease.

When is National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day?

National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day is every February 22—during American Heart Month. While it is our endeavor to raise valve disease awareness throughout the year, a dedicated day gives us the opportunity to amplify this message on a more focused scale.

Who is the Target Audience?

The primary target audience of National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day is: older adults, family caregivers, health care professionals, and other advocates & public health educators.

Key Statistics

- As many as five million Americans have been diagnosed with HVD.
- HVD involves damage to one or more of the heart's valves. Blood flow is disrupted when the valve does not open or close properly.
- HVD becomes more common with age; one in eight people age 75+ are estimated to have moderate to severe heart valve disease.
- While some types of HVD are not serious, others can lead to major complications—including death.
- After the onset of symptoms, patients with severe aortic stenosis, one of the types of valve disease, have a survival rate as low as 50 percent at two years and 20 percent at five years without valve replacement.
- Each year, an estimated 22,000 people in the U.S. die from their valve disease.
- HVD can usually be successfully treated with valve repair or replacement in patients of all ages.
- The survival rate for valve surgery is estimated at 97 percent.

STORY IDEAS

- In addition to February 22 serving as National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day, February is American Heart Month. If you plan to write stories focused on heart disease, we invite you to use the resources listed in this press kit, including the results of our recent public awareness surveys, our heart valve disease infographic (featured below), additional campaign graphics, and a library of patient resources at LivingwithValveDisease.org.
- Consider doing a story on heart valve disease in connection with a local hospital or health center. Interviews with patients and experts bring important perspectives to the story.
- You may also want to connect with a nonprofit that focuses on older adults or heart disease. Check out our list of partners below for suggestions.

Potential Story Copy

February 22 marks the official beginning of National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day, an annual observance dedicated to raising awareness about the risk factors, symptoms, detection, and treatment of heart valve disease (HVD), a condition that affects more than five million Americans. Heart valve disease causes damage to one or more valves in the heart. It can lead to major complications, including death. It is also a problem that can increase with age; one in eight people age 75 and older are estimated to have moderate to severe heart valve disease.

Despite the dangers of heart valve disease, public awareness about HVD in the U.S. is very low. A recent survey of more than 2,000 adults found that close to 50 percent of respondents had never heard of HVD, and only about one in four knew somewhat or a great deal about the disease.

“Considering that heart valve disease affects more than five million Americans, public awareness of the condition is shockingly low,” notes Susan Peschin, MHS, Alliance for Aging Research president and CEO. “Coupled with disease symptoms that are often difficult to detect or dismissed as a normal part of aging, this is a classic case of ‘what you don’t know can hurt you.’”

The potential seriousness of the condition and the current lack of awareness led a group of 30 national organizations to request that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) include National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day on its National Health Observances Calendar. The federal agency officially added the observance to its calendar in January.

The day’s inclusion on the calendar was also supported through a resolution (H.Res.941) submitted by U.S. Rep. Tony Cárdenas on December 5, 2016, “expressing support for the designation of February 22, 2017, as National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day, coinciding with American Heart Month.”

The February 22 awareness day will be celebrated with an event in Washington, D.C., as well as in other activities throughout the country. A National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day website has been launched with free resources about the condition as well as how people can spread the word. In addition, there is a Twitter page: [@valvediseaseday](https://twitter.com/valvediseaseday).

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Logo

The National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day logo is the official logo of the awareness day campaign and is designed to be used in awareness day outreach. You can download the logo here.

Please note that:

- The logo should not be altered in any way.
- It should not be associated with any brand logos or used for commercial purposes.
- The logo should only be used for education and advocacy that follows the spirit of the campaign as outlined in this document.
- The name National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day and the supporting logo are registered trademarks of the Alliance for Aging Research and can only be used as outlined in this document.
- The materials produced for this campaign are also subject to copyright laws and terms of use.



Infographic

This infographic lays out the burden of valve disease, the awareness rates from recent public opinion surveys, and information on the awareness day campaign. The individual statistics are especially well-suited for social media. You can download the infographic here.

HEART VALVE DISEASE IN THE U.S.

Heart valve disease (HVD) involves damage to one or more of the heart's valves. This can reduce blood flow and lead to major complications—including death.

HEART VALVE DISEASE CAN BE SERIOUS AND DEADLY

...5 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE HVD¹

...1 IN 8 PEOPLE AGE 75+ ARE ESTIMATED TO HAVE MODERATE TO SEVERE HVD²

...22,000 AMERICANS DIE FROM HVD EVERY YEAR³

¹ Niemo et al. 2006. Burden of Valvular Heart Diseases: A Population-Based Study. *Lancet* 368(9540):1005-11
² Ibid
³ Go et al. 2013. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2013 Update. *Circ* 127(1)

AWARENESS OF HEART VALVE DISEASE IS LOW

60% OF PEOPLE HAVE HEARD OF HVD...
BUT ONLY **9%** KNOW A GREAT DEAL ABOUT IT
AND **15%** KNOW SOMEWHAT ABOUT IT
OF THOSE 65+: **30%** KNOW NOTHING ABOUT HVD

Based on results from a national omnibus survey of 2,018 adults via randomly selected landlines and cell phones conducted by the Alliance for Aging Research and Belden Russonello Strategists

IN THOSE WITH HEART VALVE DISEASE

...2/3 KNEW NOTHING ABOUT HVD PRIOR TO THEIR DIAGNOSIS

60% WERE DIAGNOSED AFTER A REGULAR CHECK-UP OR VISIT FOR SOMETHING ELSE

Stats from an online survey of more than 400 individuals diagnosed with heart valve disease, conducted by the Alliance for Aging Research and Belden Russonello Strategists

HVD CAN USUALLY BE SUCCESSFULLY TREATED IN PATIENTS OF ALL AGES

RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE RECEIVED TREATMENT EXPRESS HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH IT

Learn more about a public awareness campaign to increase recognition of symptoms, improve detection and treatment, and ultimately save lives

ValveDiseaseDay.org

For more information about heart valve disease visit: LivingWithValveDisease.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LivingWithValveDisease.org

This website from the Alliance for Aging Research provides curated resources from leading organizations on the types of valve disease, symptoms, causes & risk factors, diagnosis, finding a health care professional, heart basics, treatment options, preparing for surgery, recovering from surgery, life after surgery, and patient & health care professional communication. It also shares stories from patients who have been diagnosed with valve disease and a Financial and Care Support Navigator.

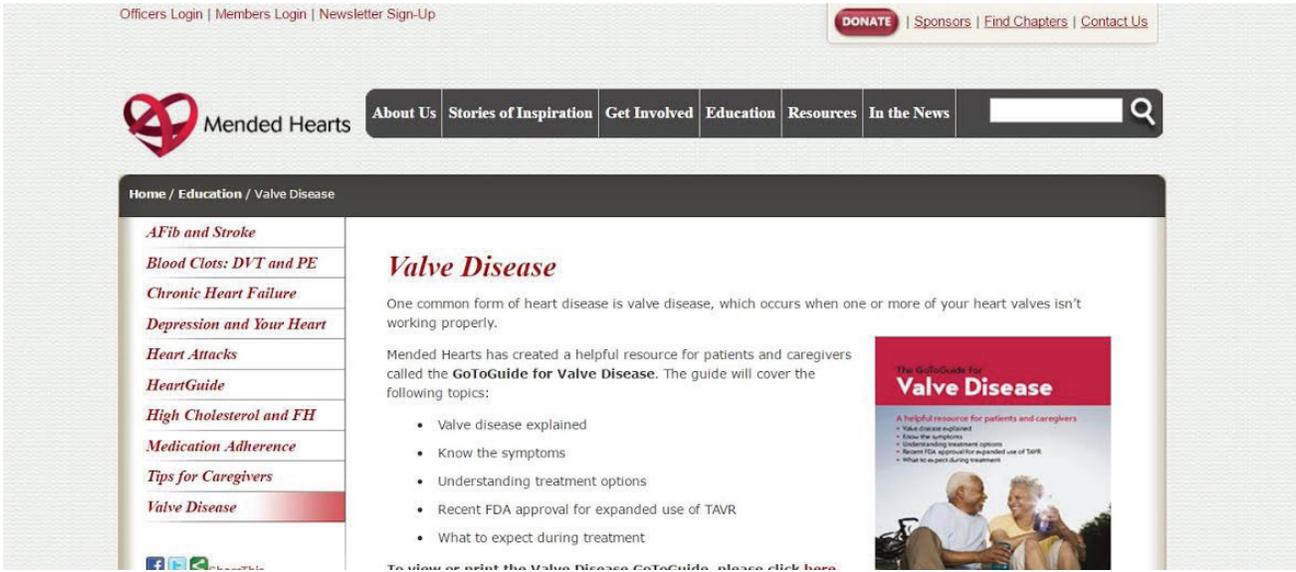
HealthyWomen.org

The nation's leading independent health information source for women, Healthy Women's heart health page shares information on managing heart disease.

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS (CONT.)

MendedHearts.org

This national and community-based nonprofit offers the gift of hope to heart patients, and through its GoToGuide for Valve Disease, provides important information for patients and caregivers on the basics of valve disease, treatment options, what to expect during treatment, and more.



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Mended Hearts About Us | Stories of Inspiration | Get Involved | Education | Resources | In the News

Home / Education / Valve Disease

- AFib and Stroke
- Blood Clots: DVT and PE
- Chronic Heart Failure
- Depression and Your Heart
- Heart Attacks
- HeartGuide
- High Cholesterol and FH
- Medication Adherence
- Tips for Caregivers
- Valve Disease**

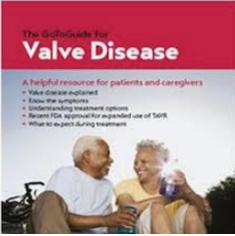
Valve Disease

One common form of heart disease is valve disease, which occurs when one or more of your heart valves isn't working properly.

Mended Hearts has created a helpful resource for patients and caregivers called the **GoToGuide for Valve Disease**. The guide will cover the following topics:

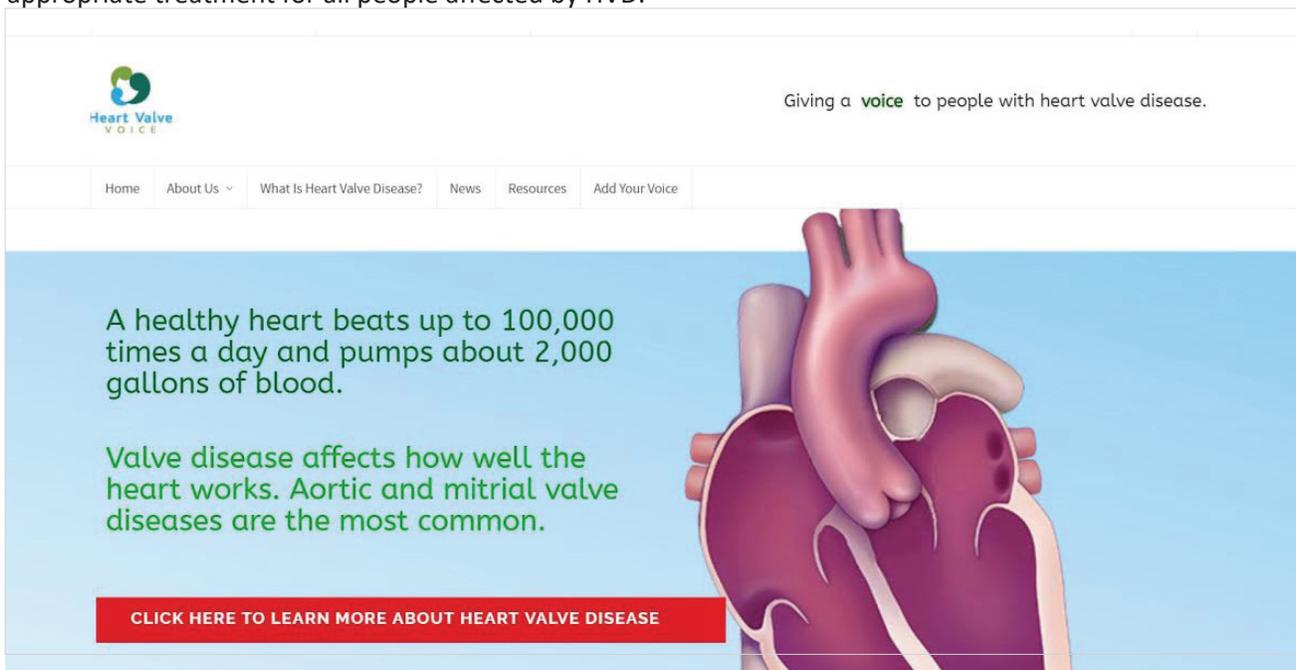
- Valve disease explained
- Know the symptoms
- Understanding treatment options
- Recent FDA approval for expanded use of TAVR
- What to expect during treatment

To view or print the Valve Disease GoToGuide, please click here.



HeartValveVoice-us.org

This patient advocacy, nonprofit organization provides patients with a unique voice to improve health for people living with HVD by advocating for early detection, meaningful support, and timely access to appropriate treatment for all people affected by HVD.



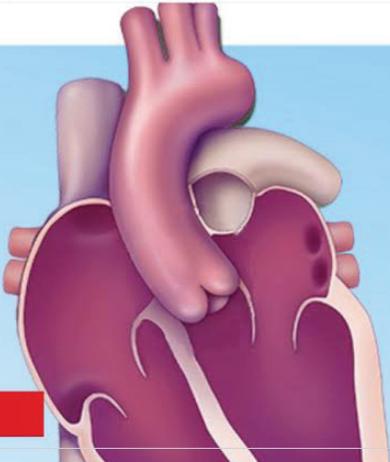
Heart Valve VOICE Giving a **voice** to people with heart valve disease.

Home | About Us | What Is Heart Valve Disease? | News | Resources | Add Your Voice

A healthy heart beats up to 100,000 times a day and pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood.

Valve disease affects how well the heart works. Aortic and mitral valve diseases are the most common.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HEART VALVE DISEASE](#)



PARTNERS



Adult Congenital Heart Association
Alliance for Aging Research
American Association for Cardiovascular and
Pulmonary Rehabilitation
Healthy Women
Heart Valve Voice
Lipoprotein(a) Foundation
Mended Hearts
Men's Health Network
OWL-The Voice of Women 40+
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society for Cardiovascular Angiography &
Interventions
Society for Women's Health Research
Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Women's Heart Foundation

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