**Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day on February 22nd Focuses on Timely Treatment**

**In Its Sixth Year, the Campaign is Raising Awareness and Encouraging People Not to Delay Care**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22, 2022 -- Today, Tuesday, February 22, more than 110 national and international organizations and thousands of patient advocates will recognize the sixth annual  [Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day](https://c212.net/c/link/?t=0&l=en&o=3072995-1&h=2726623560&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.valvediseaseday.org%2F&a=Heart+Valve+Disease+Awareness+Day) ("Valve Disease Day"), an awareness day officially acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and commemorated by a [Congressional Resolution](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-resolution/916?s=1&r=9) co-sponsored by U.S. Representatives Andy Barr, Kathleen Rice, and Joyce Beatty. The awareness day was established in 2017 by the [Alliance for Aging Research](https://c212.net/c/link/?t=0&l=en&o=3072995-1&h=34433994&u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.agingresearch.org%2F&a=Alliance+for+Aging+Research) ("Alliance") to spotlight the importance of detecting and treating heart valve disease (HVD). Many Heart Valve Disease Day Awareness Day efforts this year have focused on the impact of the pandemic on valve disease diagnosis and treatment.  
  
HVD impacts more than 11 million Americans and involves damage to one or more of the heart's four valves, interrupting blood flow and often causing serious complications, including death. HVD can exist at birth or develop later in life from calcification, radiation to the chest, some types of chemotherapy, other heart diseases and conditions, or bacterial infection. In general, those aged 75 and older are at a greater risk for HVD. Serious conditions like diabetes, previous heart conditions, and high blood pressure also increase one's risk.  
  
HVD can usually be successfully treated in patients of all ages, but the best outcomes depend on early detection and timely treatment. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in all aspects of medical care—from routine physical exams where clinicians can often detect the heart murmurs of valve disease, to follow-up exams to monitor disease progression, to surgeries to repair or replace diseased valves. This means more valve disease patients are seeking treatment with more advanced and serious disease.  
  
Lindsay Clarke, Senior Vice President of Health Education and Advocacy at the Alliance for Aging Research issued the following statement: “Awareness of valve disease is low—with three out of four Americans reporting that they know little to nothing about the disease. The pandemic has meant that even when people recognize that they have symptoms, they may be nervous about visiting their clinician and may put off getting care. This year our mission is not just about raising awareness but also helping people understand how important it is that they get care. We are grateful to our 110+ partners that are spreading the word and helping save lives.”  
  
The partners—non-profits, advocacy organizations, professional societies, foundations, hospitals, and heart centers—are engaging with patients and advocates around the world through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, podcasts, blog posts, press releases, and more. Additionally, many of the partners are coming together on February 22nd to host events for the Virtual Valve Disease Day conference featuring valve disease patients, world-renowned experts, advocates, and more. The conference agenda with details on how to join the events is available at [www.valvediseaseday.org/virtualconference](http://www.valvediseaseday.org/virtualconference). Events include:

* Remarks from U.S. Representative Andy Barr on his and other Congressional efforts to advance support for valve disease.
* A discussion of NIH funded valve research between Dr. Frank Evans, Program Director of Heart Development and Structural Diseases at the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute, and Dr. Joanna Chikwe of the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars Sinai and Dr. Judy Hung of Massachusetts General Hospital.
* A panel led by Dignity Health Arizona looking at how their structural heart program, women’s heart program, and WomenHeart support group are tackling disparities in valve disease.
* A dialogue between cardiac surgeons and interventional cardiologists at MedStar Health on recent advances in heart valve disease.
* An official #ValveDiseaesDay Twitter chat co-hosted by the Alliance for Aging Research and WebMD and focused on the impact of the pandemic on valve disease. Participants will include Valve Disease Day partners and advocates.
* The Valve Disease Day Flagship event hosted by Piedmont Heart Institute involving a panel of experts tackling the importance of the multidisciplinary team framework at Piedmont, raising patient awareness, the TVT registry, and public reporting.
* A peer support discussion led by Mended Hearts and heart valve patients, with an emphasis on how patient support has been revolutionized during the pandemic.
* A conversation on navigating the patient/care partner journey, hosted by Heart Valve Voice, US.
* A conversation between CardioVisual and Dr. Olusean Alli on building valve disease awareness.
* An engaging discussion from the co-directors of Inova’s Structural Heart/Valve Disease Program on their comprehensive approach to evaluating the best course of valve disease treatment.

Learn more about the Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day activities by following the #ValveDiseaseDay hashtag on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and visiting [www.ValveDiseaseDay.org](http://www.ValveDiseaseDay.org).

*The 2022 Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day campaign was made possible with support from Edwards Lifesciences Foundation and Abbott.*

*The Alliance for Aging Research is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific discoveries and their application to vastly improve the universal human experience of aging and health. The Alliance believes advances in research help people live longer, happier, more productive lives and reduce healthcare costs over the long term. For more than 35 years, the Alliance has guided efforts to substantially increase funding and focus for aging at the National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration; built influential coalitions to guide groundbreaking regulatory improvements for age-related diseases; and created award-winning, high-impact educational materials to improve the health and well-being of older adults and their family caregivers. For more information visit* [*www.agingresearch.org*](http://www.agingresearch.org)*.*