

Contact: Tori Gabriel
Email: torig@floridaheart.org
Direct Line: (305) 604-3252

For Immediate Release

Governor Charlie Crist Proclaims Stop Heart Disease Week

Miami, Florida, February 5, 2009— The Florida Heart Research Institute (FHRI) is pleased to announce that Governor Charlie Crist has proclaimed February 2-9, 2009 to be **Stop Heart Disease Week**. Cardiovascular disease claims over 40% of all deaths each year, making it the #1 killer in this country and in Florida. In Florida, there will be over 64,000 who will die from heart disease and hospitalization costs to care for Floridians with heart disease will top 18.6 billion per year. Coordinated by the Florida Heart Research Institute, the week-long campaign will emphasize that every Floridian must take proactive action to “know their numbers” to determine their individual level of risk of heart disease so that appropriate preventive or corrective measures can be taken to reduce that risk.

The Florida media will be asked this week to assist the Research Institute in disseminating important life-saving information to educate the public. Medical reporters of newspapers throughout the state will be contacted to publish educational heart-related articles. Both English and Spanish radio and TV stations will be asked to air public service announcements discussing such topics as healthy eating habits, the dangers of smoking, and the need to control high blood pressure. Florida Heart Research Institute physicians will be on hand for interviews to encourage the public to make significant lifestyle changes to reduce their heart risk factors and learn when to seek medical assistance.

“We encourage all Floridians to take the time to get screened and find out if they’re at risk,” says FHRI’s Chief Executive Officer, Kathleen DuCasse. “Heart disease is not a death sentence- it can be prevented, stopped and even reversed when the proper corrective steps are taken.”

This campaign augments the mission of the **Stop Heart Disease** license plate which raises funds for heart disease research, education and prevention programs throughout the state of Florida. Proceeds from the sale of the license plate funds leading edge scientific research by Florida’s top medical researchers, educational literature, lectures for physicians and the public, and free preventive heart screenings for Florida residents.

FHRI was founded more than 60 years ago as Miami Heart Research Institute, an international leader with a mission to **Stop Heart Disease** through cardiovascular research, education, and prevention programs. For more information regarding this and other exciting projects at Florida Heart Research Institute, please contact Tori Gabriel at (305) 604-3252, or visit us at www.floridaheart.org.

