



SOUTH ASIAN HEART HEALTH AWARENESS & RESEARCH

THE ISSUE:

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for most racial and ethnic groups in the United States. According to the Stanford South Asian Translational Heart Initiative, South Asian communities have a risk of heart disease that is four times higher than the general population and are significantly more likely to have a heart attack before age 50. Additionally, the prevalence of diabetes – one of the primary risk factors for developing cardiovascular disease – within the South Asian population is extremely high and continues to rise rapidly.

ACC'S POSITION:

It is important that Congress take thoughtful action to address this issue and decrease health inequities by expanding grants for culturally appropriate outreach efforts and research. In the 2019 Mediators of Atherosclerosis in South Asians Living in America (MASALA) study conducted by the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association, researchers found a higher prevalence of type 2 diabetes in South Asians (23%), Blacks (18%), Latinos (17%) and Chinese Americans (13%) compared to Caucasians (6%). Reducing the burden of diabetes, risk of heart disease, decreased quality of life, and untimely death within these communities is a task of great importance.

ACC'S ASK:

Pass the ***South Asian Heart Health Awareness & Research Act of 2022 (SAHHARA)*** (H.R. 3771) introduced by Reps. Pramila Jayapal (D-WA) and Joe Wilson (R-SC), which passed in the U.S. House and was referred to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions in July 2022.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



SAHHARA authorizes \$10 million over 4 years to fund awareness initiatives through the CDC and support research through the NIH related to cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and other heart-related ailments among at-risk populations.



These research funds will go a long way to improve care and outcomes, while reducing health care costs related to heart disease in this at-risk population.



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VALVULAR HEART DISEASE RESEARCH

THE ISSUE:

Originally introduced to honor the life of Eleanor “Carol” Barr, the late wife of Rep. Andy Barr (R-KY), the CAROL Act (H.R. 1193/S. 1133) provides critical funding for research on valvular heart disease. At 39 years of age, Carol passed away from sudden cardiac death related to the condition. To honor her legacy and protect others from similar tragedies, Rep. Barr worked with the cardiovascular community, including the ACC, to introduce and advance this necessary legislation.

ACC'S POSITION:

Each year, roughly 935,000 Americans will have a heart attack, and more than 30% will experience a secondary life-threatening cardiovascular event. Currently, there is no heart valve disease screening recommendation from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force nor is screening part of the “Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit or the yearly “Wellness” visit. It is important for the public and clinicians to be aware of patients’ risk for valve disease, to recognize symptoms, and to provide or receive accurate and timely diagnosis. According to an awareness survey, 3 out of 4 Americans report knowing little to nothing about heart valve disease and many are never diagnosed or are diagnosed late in the course of the disease. Additionally, the COVID-19 public health emergency has caused many to delay health care and medical treatment.

ACC'S ASK:

Co-sponsor and support the ***Cardiovascular Advances in Research and Opportunities Legacy (CAROL) Act*** (S. 1133) introduced by Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ).

KEY TAKEAWAYS



The **CAROL Act** authorizes \$20 million to support valvular heart disease research through NHLBI, and instructs the CDC to conduct an awareness campaign on the condition.



More than 5 million individuals are diagnosed with valvular heart disease each year.



Valvular heart disease results in 25,000 deaths in the U.S. every year.



Women account for one-third of cases of sudden cardiac arrest.