

# HEART BEAT

## Heart Patients Not Getting Proper Treatment Two National Surveys Show

(NAPSA)—Better education could save many lives, physicians say.

There's strong scientific evidence that adding beta-blockers to standard heart failure therapy benefits patients, but thousands are not receiving this class of drugs, according to new data presented at the Heart Failure Society of America annual meeting. The data is based on a survey of cardiologists, internists and general practitioners, conducted by Arthur Feldman, M.D., Ph.D., Magee Professor of Medicine and Chairman of the Department at Jefferson Medical College of Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.

Dr. Feldman says, "With heart failure being the only cardiovascular disease that is increasing in incidence in the United States, it is crucial that heart failure experts are utilizing beta-blockers to manage the condition. When used in conjunction with other medications, they have been shown to increase survival, potentially improve symptoms, enhance quality of life and decrease hospitalizations."

Two additional surveys of heart failure patients and consumers found only 22 percent of patients took a beta-blocker. 89 percent of surveyed consumers believe patients can live with heart failure, yet only 47 percent could define the condition.

Heart failure begins when some other condition, a heart attack, high blood pressure or a heart muscle disorder, damages the



**Doctors are working on ways to fight heart failure, which affects approximately five million people in the U.S., with 550,000 new cases each year.**

heart, which fails to pump blood normally, causing fatigue, shortness of breath, swelling of feet or ankles and chest discomfort.

Beta-blockers improve heart function by reducing the heart's tendency to beat faster. When used with diuretics, digoxin or ACE inhibitors, beta-blockers can help decrease heart failure symptoms.

Adds Dr. Feldman, "The challenging part of dealing with heart failure patients is helping them realize that there is life after diagnosis. By getting good care, watching their diet and following appropriate treatment regimens, including beta-blockers, they can reduce their symptoms and enjoy a more normal life."

A new Web site, HeartFailureReportCard.org, supported by an educational grant from AstraZeneca LP, has been developed to help visitors learn more about heart failure and ways to manage the condition.