



# WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Lowering Risk For Heart Disease—The Leading Cause Of Death For American Females—Can Start With A Heartfelt Moment

(NAPSA)—Until last year, actress Caitlin Van Zandt of “Guiding Light” and “The Sopranos” was one of the 35 million obese women in the United States, causing her to also be one of the 41 million women in this country living with or at risk of heart disease. Though she was only 22 years old, Caitlin was at risk of developing heart disease because she was significantly overweight and had high cholesterol. Like many other women, Caitlin was surprised to learn just how much her weight could negatively impact her health.

A recent survey of approximately 1,000 women revealed that 97 percent of women understand being overweight is a significant risk factor for heart disease, yet 55 percent are overweight.

So, while women understand their risk of heart disease, many are not taking action to live heart healthy through losing weight. This may be because women do not adequately fear heart disease, which kills more women each year in the United States than any other disease. In fact, the survey found that nearly three times as many women fear getting cancer as fear developing heart disease.

Of the risk factors for heart disease, being significantly overweight has been shown to put a person at higher risk of early heart attack than any other risk factor. In fact, overweight people experience heart attacks a decade sooner than “normal” weight people.

Once Caitlin understood how her weight put her at risk for heart disease, she also feared for her mother, Barbara. Barbara was more than 100 pounds overweight, and she was on medication for high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Scared for each other’s health, Caitlin and Barbara shared a heartfelt moment and made the decision to reduce their heart disease risk by losing weight. During the past year, Caitlin has lost 92 pounds and her cholesterol levels do not require medication, a treatment her physician was considering before she lost the weight. Similarly, Barbara has lost 75



**A Heartfelt Moment: Actress Caitlin Van Zandt and her mother Barbara both lost considerable weight in an effort to reduce heart disease risk.**

pounds and her cholesterol and blood pressure are under control.

An astonishing 80 percent of women ages 40 to 60 have one or more risk factors for heart disease, including being overweight or obese. This is part of the reason why Caitlin and Barbara are sharing their stories as part of the Heartfelt Moments Obesity Health Education Campaign, which aims to educate overweight women regarding their increased risk of heart disease and the importance of reducing this risk through effective weight loss. The campaign is sponsored by Allergan, Inc., developers of the LAP-BAND AP® Adjustable Gastric Banding System, and is initiated in partnership with WomenHeart, a leading nonprofit national organization dedicated to advancing women’s heart health.

“It is imperative that women know the risk factors for heart disease,” said Lisa M. Tate, Chief Executive Officer of WomenHeart. “However, awareness regarding risk factors isn’t enough; women need to act now to manage their heart disease risk. And since weight man-

agement is a key way to reduce heart disease risk, significantly overweight women should speak with a doctor about effective weight-loss treatment options.”

Achieving long-term weight loss can be daunting, particularly for those who are 100 pounds or more overweight. The new survey showed that 54 percent of obese women surveyed noted diet and exercise as an effective weight-loss method for those 100 pounds overweight. However, in reality, studies have found that for these people, diet and exercise alone fail 95 percent of the time, and people regain as much as two-thirds of the weight within one year and almost all of it within five years.

After years of unsuccessful diet and exercise programs, Caitlin and Barbara lost weight with the assistance of the LAP-BAND AP® System procedure, which is less invasive than gastric bypass. But, their weight-loss journey began with a heartfelt moment when they both acknowledged the effect weight was having on their heart health. Now, they want others to do the same.

While the survey found that four out of 10 women do not discuss heart disease risk with their loved ones, 79 percent of obese women said they would react positively if a friend or family member spoke to them about their weight.

“I encourage you to look at the women in your life and look at yourself. If any of you are significantly overweight, heart disease should be a major health concern. Now is the time to act—have that heartfelt moment and discuss weight as a risk factor for heart disease and what you can do to get your weight under control,” said Caitlin. “I want women who are 100 pounds or more overweight to know that there are effective weight-loss treatment options, beyond just diet and exercise, and with the right tools and plan, and support of loved ones, you can take the weight off and live heart healthy.”

The Heartfelt Moments Obesity Health Education Campaign provides resources and tools on [www.HeartfeltMoments.org](http://www.HeartfeltMoments.org).