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**PROVIDENCE HEALTH PARTNERS WITH THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR THE FIRST-EVER  
NATIONAL HEART VALVE DISEASE DAY – Feb. 22**

**COLUMBIA, SC** –Providence Health is partnering with the first-ever National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day on February 22, 2017. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services added National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day to its National Health Observances Calendar just seven weeks ago. This observance day is dedicated to raising awareness about heart valve disease (HVD)—its risk factors, symptoms, detection, and treatment.

Despite the fact that more than five million Americans are affected by HVD, public awareness of the disease is shockingly low. A recent survey of more than 2,000 adults found that 40% have never heard of HVD, and only about one in four knew somewhat or a great deal about the disease.

"The life-altering seriousness of heart valve disease, combined with the fact that symptoms are often difficult to detect or dismissed as a 'normal' part of aging, makes the reported lack of public awareness dangerous," says Susan Peschin, MHS, president and CEO of the Alliance for Aging Research. "We felt strongly that we needed to establish National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day with the support of our leading partners in the space, and we are grateful to HHS for listing the day on the NHO Calendar."

HVD consists of damage to one or more of the heart's valves; most HVD involves a damaged valve that disrupts blood flow by not opening or closing properly. While some types of HVD are not serious, other types, such as aortic stenosis, can lead to major complications—including death. An estimated 50 percent of patients with severe aortic stenosis will die within two years if they do not receive treatment.

Methods of treatment for treating heart valve disease might include medicines, repairing or replacing faulty valves, and developing heart-healthy lifestyle changes to treat other heart conditions that arise from HVD.

"Heart Valve Disease is important to us. Providence Health was the first hospital in the Midlands to perform Aortic Valve Replacement, and we also introduced the groundbreaking transcatheter aortic valve replacement to the community," said Dr. William Yarbrough, cardiothoracic surgeon at Providence Health who performs these procedures. "In fact, we have a dedicated Valve Care Clinic to ensure that the people of South Carolina who are afflicted with heart valve disease have the best in quality care available to them."

Some interesting information about HVD:

- As many as 5 million Americans have been diagnosed with heart valve disease (HVD).

- HVD involves damages to one or more of the heart's valves which disrupts blood flow by not opening or closing properly.
- HVD becomes more common with age—1 in 8 people ages 75+ are estimated to have moderate to severe heart valve disease.

A National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day website has been launched, along with a Twitter account @ValveDiseaseDay featuring messaging focused on heart valve disease and the outreach efforts of the partnering organizations. The #ValveDiseaseDay hashtag will also be used to follow related outreach efforts. Providence will be posting important information about HVD throughout these channels throughout the day.

**About Providence Health:**

A part of LifePoint Health, Providence Health is the leading provider of cardiovascular and orthopedic services in the Midlands. Providence is composed of two hospitals, sixteen physician practices, a network of rehabilitation centers, two sleep centers, an imaging and diagnostics lab, a school of cardiac diagnostics and an accredited chest pain center. In total, Providence employs more than 1,800 dedicated staff. Founded in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, Providence is known statewide for outstanding clinical quality and compassionate care. Providence Health was recognized nationally by U.S. News & World Report, tying for second place as the Best Hospital in South Carolina. In addition, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services awarded Providence Health a 4-star rating, which is the highest rank issued to a Columbia health care entity. The Providence open heart surgery program has consistently ranked in the top 15 percent of open heart programs in the nation. Both orthopedics and cardiac services have received the South Carolina BlueCross BlueShield Blue Distinction Center designation. For more information, visit [YourProvidenceHealth.com](http://YourProvidenceHealth.com).

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