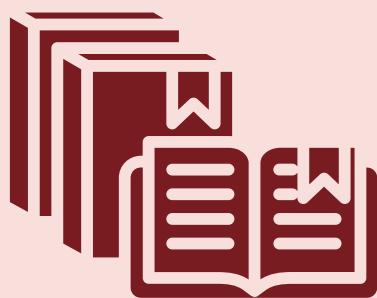




Youth Cardiovascular Health Opportunities

Student, Parent, Teacher

Resource Guide



About This Resources Guide

Dear Reader,

As someone who has several family members living with or who have lost their lives to cardiovascular disease (CVD), I know the pain and lasting impact it can have. I find hope in prevention. This guide was created to offer practical tools and resources that can help you take action today—whether it's learning about lifestyle changes, finding ways to advocate, getting involved with organizations working to prevent CVD, or supporting others in your life to make healthier choices. It's about empowering young people and their parents, caregivers, and educators to understand that we do not and should not have to wait for disease to strike. We can and must prevent, not treat.

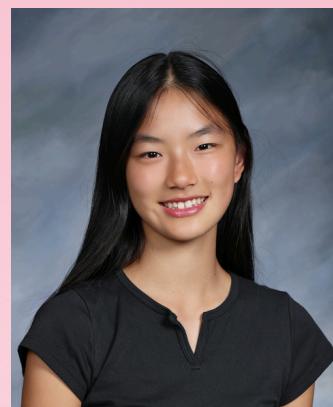
Knowledge is power, and with the right information, we can shift the narrative on heart health. Awareness is always the first step to action, and the rest is history. Or rather, the rest is our future. And it is up to us, as youth, to write it. One heart at a time.

Thank you for being part of this important work. I hope you find these resources helpful and inspiring as you continue your journey to better heart health.

With Heart,
Alina Yang

Acknowledgments

This resource guide is a joint effort between Guardians of the Heart and the New York State Public Health Association (NYSPHA). NYSPHA is the New York State affiliate of the American Public Health Association and the premier association for public health professionals and students in the state. NYSPHA and its membership are invested in fighting CVD using a prevention approach. A special thank you goes to NYSPHA's Public Health in Action Committee by supporting the development of this guide.



**Something to add?
Email: advocacy@nyspha.org**

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Introduction

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death in New York State, in the United States, and worldwide. While it may seem like a concern for older adults, the reality is that it is increasingly affecting younger generations. Our lifestyles—what we eat, how much we exercise, and how we manage stress—are all contributing to a growing cardiovascular health crisis among youth. After all, cardiovascular disease doesn't develop overnight. It is shaped by the choices we make every day. The habits we form now will impact the health of our hearts for the rest of our lives.

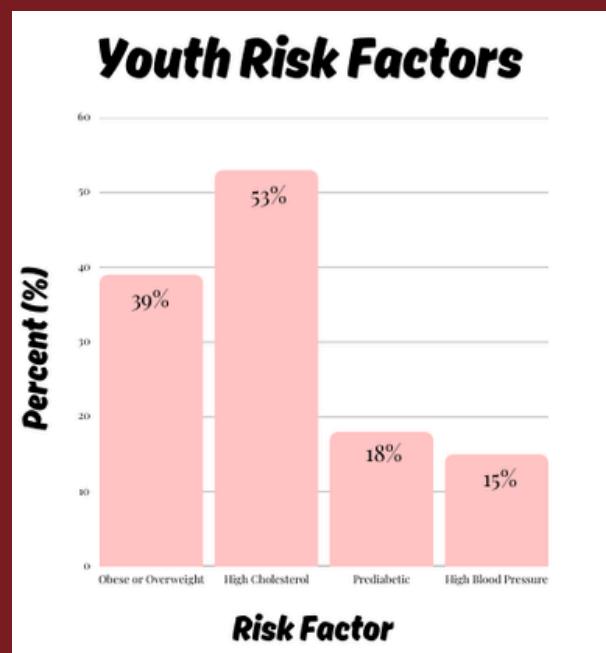
The good news is that we can change this, and that change starts with us. This guide is designed to equip young people with the knowledge, tools, and resources needed to take charge of their heart health and become advocates for healthier lifestyles, both for themselves and their communities.

We also provide resources for parents and teachers, who play an essential role in fostering heart-healthy habits at home and in the classroom. By empowering those around us to prioritize heart health, we can build a stronger, more supportive network for change.

Cardiovascular health is not just an individual issue—it's a collective one. Together, we can transform our schools, neighborhoods, and cities into heart-healthy environments where good habits are encouraged, supported, and celebrated.

Public Health Problem

Current data show that 39% of US youth ages 12–19 are obese or overweight, 53% have high cholesterol, 18% are prediabetic, and 15% have high blood pressure, all of which are risk factors for heart disease [1]. These numbers highlight a growing crisis but also offer us hope: we can prevent this.



1. Survey of CVD programs finds more resources needed for heart disease and stroke risk in youth. American Heart Association. <https://newsroom.heart.org/news/survey-of-cvd-programs-finds-more-resources-needed-for-heart-disease-and-stroke-risk-in-youth>

Lifestyle Medicine

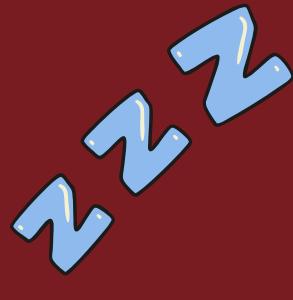
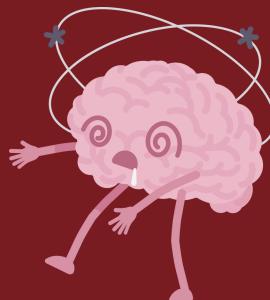
One of the most powerful tools we have to prevent heart disease is lifestyle medicine—an approach that focuses on the everyday habits and choices we make that affect our health. Unlike traditional medicine, which often focuses on treating symptoms and managing diseases after they occur, lifestyle medicine emphasizes prevention by addressing the root causes of chronic conditions like heart disease.

Studies have shown that 80% of premature heart disease is preventable through lifestyle changes such as diet, exercise, and stress management [2]. By making simple, consistent changes to our daily routines, we can dramatically reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease in the future.

What You Can Do [3]

- **NUTRITION:** A heart-healthy diet is crucial—one that emphasizes whole, plant-based foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes while limiting processed foods, sugary drinks, and excessive amounts of unhealthy fats.
- **EXERCISE:** Regular physical activity is also essential; young people should aim for at least 60 minutes of exercise every day. Activities like walking, running, biking, swimming, or even dancing can all strengthen the heart.
- **STRESS MANAGEMENT:** It's important to manage stress through relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, yoga, or meditation. These practices not only improve mental well-being but also reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease.
- **SLEEP:** Aiming for 8-10 hours per night is equally important, as poor sleep is linked to higher risks of heart disease and other chronic conditions.
- **SMOKING CESSATION:** Smoking damages blood vessels and raises the risk of heart disease, so eliminating this habit reduces those risks dramatically.
- **KNOW YOUR NUMBERS:** Regularly monitoring key health metrics like blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, and weight helps track cardiovascular health. Early detection of any issues allows for timely intervention and better management of heart health.

For more information and resources, visit [here](#).



2. Preventing Heart Disease. The Nutrition Source. Published May 9, 2014. <https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/disease-prevention/cardiovascular-disease/preventing-cvd/>

3. Life's Essential 8. American Heart Association. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-lifestyle/lifes-essential-8>

Join an Organization!

Getting involved in heart health promotion and disease prevention can have a huge impact on both your own well-being and the health of those around you. By joining one of these incredible organizations, you can help raise awareness, support heart disease prevention, and advocate for healthier communities. Whether you're passionate about research, community outreach, or lifestyle medicine, there are many ways to take action. Below are some organizations that provide youth opportunities to get involved, learn, and make a difference!

American Heart Association

The American Heart Association's mission is to be a relentless force for longer, healthier lives. With over 100 years of leadership in the fight against heart disease and stroke, they are committed to advancing heart and brain health through science, education, and advocacy. Youth can join in on their [2028 Impact Goal](#) to drive breakthroughs in cardiovascular care and health policy to improve outcomes for people and communities. See their NY chapter [here](#).

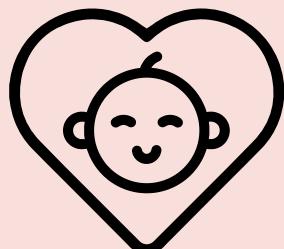


American College of Cardiology

The American College of Cardiology envisions a world where science, knowledge, and innovation optimize cardiovascular care and outcomes. Their mission is to empower clinicians, researchers, and healthcare professionals with the latest science, research, and education to enhance patient care. Youth can get involved by attending educational events or joining programs aimed at raising awareness. See their NY chapter [here](#).

Mended Hearts, Young Mended Hearts, & Mended Little Hearts

Mended Hearts provides peer support, education, and advocacy to adults living with heart disease, helping them connect with others who understand their challenges. Young Mended Hearts specifically supports adults aged 18-55 with heart conditions, offering a space for them to share their experiences and find community among peers who are facing similar health struggles. Mended Little Hearts focuses on families of children born with congenital heart defects (CHDs), providing support, education, and advocacy for parents and caregivers. Youth can [volunteer](#) to offer peer support to those facing similar challenges, organize local events, or raise awareness about the emotional and practical aspects of living with heart conditions.



Children's Heartlink

Children's Heartlink's mission is to save children's lives by transforming pediatric heart care in underserved regions around the world. Youth can get involved by organizing fundraising events or raising awareness about heart health in communities where pediatric heart care is lacking. Their long-term approach to improving heart care through education and partnerships offers a chance for youth to be part of a global mission to save children's lives.

Join an Organization!

Children's Heart Foundation

The Children's Heart Foundation is the leading organization in the U.S. solely dedicated to funding research on congenital heart defects (CHDs). Youth can engage by organizing or participating in fundraising events, helping to educate others about the importance of CHD research, and advocating for better care for children with heart defects. Since their founding, they've invested nearly \$18 million into CHD research, driving breakthroughs that have dramatically improved survival rates, longevity, and quality of life for individuals living with these conditions. See their NY chapter [here](#).

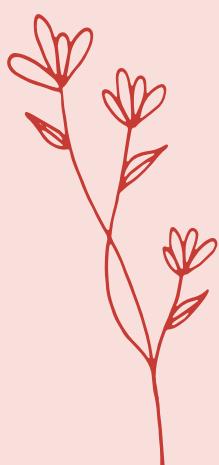


Guardians of the Heart

Guardians of the Heart empowers youth to combat CVD by promoting healthy habits like proper nutrition, physical activity, and adequate sleep. Through volunteer opportunities at fundraisers, expert panels, educational workshops, blood pressure screenings, and heart-healthy meal distribution, the organization engages youth in prevention and not treatment, creating a healthier future and protecting the hearts of generations to come.

Cardiovascular Research Foundation

The Cardiovascular Research Foundation is dedicated to advancing the treatment of heart and vascular disease through innovation, investigation, and education. Youth can join them in their mission to help doctors improve survival rates and the quality of life for people living with heart disease by identifying, developing, and promoting the latest breakthroughs in cardiovascular treatments.



Million Hearts

Million Hearts® is a national initiative co-led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, with the goal of preventing one million CVD events between January 2022 and December 2026. Youth can contribute to their focus on convening healthcare and public health champions to foster collaboration, share resources, and promote evidence-based strategies for prevention while addressing health inequities by advocating for policies and practices that ensure everyone has access to the resources and care they need to prevent heart disease and stroke.

Join an Organization!

The Heart Foundation

Founded in 1996, The Heart Foundation was established in memory of Steven Cohen, who tragically died from a sudden heart attack at age 35, despite being seemingly healthy. Their mission is to save lives by increasing awareness, promoting early detection, and supporting innovative research at the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai under the direction of renowned cardiologist Dr. P.K. Shah.



Global Heart Hub

Founded as the first global non-profit dedicated to representing those affected by CVD, the Global Heart Hub unites heart patient organizations to advocate for better healthcare outcomes. Get involved to help strengthen patient advocacy, support CVD organizations, and represent heart patients on global and regional platforms alongside healthcare decision-makers.

WomenHeart

WomenHeart empowers women through education and support, ensuring they have equal access to accurate diagnosis and treatment. In 25 years, they've built a national network of nearly 100 support groups and trained over 1,000 heart disease survivors as community educators. Youth can help raise awareness of the unique ways heart disease affects women, apply to be WomenHeart Champions, or help spread educational resources. See their NY chapter [here](#).



Women's Heart Alliance

Women's Heart Alliance focuses on the gender differences in heart disease, highlighting the fact that women's hearts are smaller, their symptoms and risk factors differ from men's, and they often respond differently to treatments. Through strategic efforts and innovative awareness campaigns, youth can participate in advocacy for gender equity in research, prevention, and care.

Family Heart Foundation

The Family Heart Foundation is committed to saving families from heart disease by improving the identification and care of familial hypercholesterolemia and elevated Lipoprotein(a). Through research, advocacy, and education, youth can help empower patients and families to make informed decisions about their health.



Join an Organization!

Open My Heart Foundation

The Open My Heart Foundation addresses heart health disparities among African American women and women of color, who are disproportionately affected by heart disease, by assisting with medical treatment, equipment, and co-pays. Their services include monthly support group meetings, heart-healthy food, and educational programs led by experts in heart health, wellness, fitness, and yoga and supported by youth volunteers. They also offer community resources and hospital visitation.



Heart Rhythm Society

Heart Rhythm Society strives to improve patient outcomes by advancing research, education, and the development of best practices and healthcare policies in the field of cardiac rhythm disorders. With over 8,600 members across more than 90 countries, they are a leading organization in cardiac electrophysiology and pacing. Youth can contribute by attending events, supporting awareness campaigns, and exploring careers in cardiac research and electrophysiology.

Heart Failure Society of America

Heart Failure Society of America works to improve heart failure care through collaboration, education, research, innovation, and advocacy. Their diverse membership, which includes physicians, scientists, nurses, pharmacists, and patients, focuses on expanding knowledge and advancing treatment options for heart failure, initiatives that youth can participate in.



Kids with Heart

Kids With Heart National Association for Children's Heart Disorders, founded in 1985, is a nonprofit organization that provides support, resources, and awareness for families affected by congenital heart defects. They offer surgical care packages, local support groups, and an online listserv to connect families. Youth can raise awareness through local events or volunteer to support families in need.

World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation works towards a world where everyone has access to the information, care, and treatment they need to maintain heart health, regardless of their race, nationality, gender, age, education, or income. Youth can participate in international campaigns such as global petitions to support the federation's core values of Care, Equity, Community, Integrity, and Aspiration.



Join an Organization!

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation

The Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation aims to reduce preventable deaths and disabilities from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) through education, research, and community engagement. They raise awareness about the differences between SCA and heart attack, emphasizing the importance of immediate bystander intervention—such as CPR and AED use—on survival rates. Youth can organize CPR and AED training and advocate for post-resuscitation therapies that improve outcomes for survivors and promote better emergency response systems.



Saving Hearts Foundation

Saving Hearts Foundation is committed to reducing the risk of SCA, the leading cause of death among youth athletes. With one in 300 youth carrying an undetected heart condition that increases their risk of SCA, the foundation provides free heart screenings to identify potential threats before they turn fatal, encouraging young people to participate in screenings and raise awareness within their communities.

Aidan's Heart Foundation

Aidan's Heart Foundation was established in 2010 after the tragic loss of Aidan Joseph Silva to SCA. Their mission is to create heart-safe environments for youth, focusing on preventing SCA and improving responses to cardiac emergencies through raising awareness, educating, and supporting communities, thereby involving youth in volunteer activities in the process.

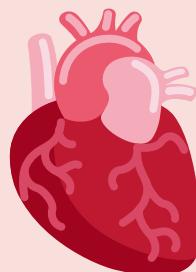


Simon's Heart

Simon's Heart was founded in memory of Simon, a young boy who tragically passed away from SCA. Its mission is to create and advance innovative, evidence-based programs, policies, and research aimed at preventing SCA and death in children, teens, and young adults. They are driven by the core values of curiosity, integrity, empathy, innovation, and collaboration, where youth have the opportunity to work alongside medical professionals, educators, and policymakers to improve heart health awareness and create heart-safe communities.

Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation

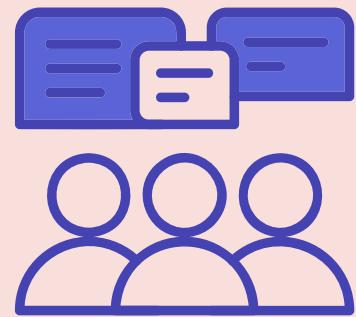
Children's Cardiomyopathy Foundation works to create a future where pediatric cardiomyopathy is diagnosed earlier, more lives are saved, and children with the disease can lead active, fulfilling lives. They fund research into pediatric cardiomyopathy, advocate for improved medical care, and raise public awareness. Teens can help by sharing educational materials, supporting research efforts, and getting involved in community outreach to raise awareness about the condition.



Join an Organization!

National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention

This forum brings together diverse organizations to collaborate and share best practices in cardiovascular health. Co-founded in 2002 by the CDC, the American Heart Association, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, their mission is to promote collaborative efforts that optimize cardiovascular health across all life stages. With a vision of heart-healthy, stroke-free lives, the forum fosters dialogue, innovation, and partnerships to prevent heart disease and stroke, ensuring inclusive, transparent strategies for public health improvement. Youth can play a role by joining advocacy efforts, participating in public health initiatives, and helping to spread the message about heart disease and stroke prevention.



New York State Public Health Association

The New York State Public Health Association (NYSOPHA), an affiliate of the American Public Health Association, works to improve public health across New York by advocating for policy changes and promoting health equity. It brings together professionals from various sectors, including healthcare, policy, and research. NYSOPHA offers numerous committees focused on specific public health issues, where youth can intern to gain experience in health advocacy, education, public health practice, event planning, and fund development. These committees provide opportunities for young people to get involved in meaningful work that addresses public health challenges, including cardiovascular health, mental health, and environmental health.

Programs & Councils

Joining a program or council focused on heart health is a great way to contribute actively to important initiatives and gain hands-on experience. These groups offer opportunities to collaborate with peers, work to plan community-based projects, and learn from professionals in the field.

AHA Youth Leadership Council

The American Heart Association's National Youth Leadership Council offers high school and college students the opportunity to shape youth volunteerism and advocate for heart and brain health. A group of 11 students ages 16 to 22 will be selected each year to collaborate with AHA executives, provide input on engagement strategies, and help develop programs for youth involvement, including Heart Clubs. By joining this council, members will get the opportunity to improve volunteer involvement, fundraising strategies, and Next Gen programs, with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. They will also promote National Volunteer Week, recognize outstanding youth volunteers, and support Heart Clubs by leading orientations, creating engaging content, and assisting with communication. To be eligible, applicants must have leadership experience, effective communication skills, and the ability to commit three to four hours per month to virtual meetings and service projects.



Kids Heart Challenge

The Kids Heart Challenge engages elementary school students across the country in heart-healthy physical activities while raising funds for the American Heart Association. Focused on whole-body wellness, the program helps students improve their health, develop good character, and support children with special hearts. The program offers a variety of educational resources covering topics like teamwork, kindness, anti-vaping, and positive thinking, along with physical education tools and videos aligned with state teaching standards.



With interactive characters and an updated app, the Kids Heart Challenge encourages emotional and physical well-being, while online fundraising supports the cause. Teachers and educators receive step-by-step guidance to facilitate fun, engaging activities that promote heart health and inspire students to become Heart Heroes. Students, parents, and staff members can sign up their school for the Kids Heart Challenge and/or the American Heart Challenge.

Programs & Councils



American Heart Challenge

The American Heart Challenge is a service-learning program designed to empower middle and high school students to improve their physical and mental well-being while fostering social responsibility. Students engage in fundraising and awareness campaigns to promote health equity and fight heart disease and stroke.

The program offers leadership opportunities, with high school students eligible for scholarships and schools able to apply for grant funding. Middle schools earn incentives, including certificates and discounts, as well as up to \$2,500 in funding.

Participating students raise awareness about Hands-Only CPR, physical activity, and the dangers of vaping and smoking. Schools also gain access to OPEN curriculum, which provides resources for physical activity and wellness, addressing both mental and physical health, as well as offering conversation starters on teen health concerns. The American Heart Challenge equips educators with tools to host engaging activities that promote a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Youth Heart Ambassadors

The National Youth Heart Ambassadors program offers young individuals, ages 2-19, the chance to become the voice of the American Heart Association's in-school initiatives. This program invites youth who have been personally impacted by heart disease or stroke—either through their own diagnosis, that of a loved one, or a strong passion for heart-healthy lifestyles—to apply and share their stories. Youth Heart Ambassadors play a vital role in helping the American Heart Association inspire healthier lives and raise awareness about heart health.

Youth selected for this prestigious role are often featured in emails, videos, newsletters, and social media campaigns. They may also be invited to participate in events, including speaking opportunities, interviews, and contributing to other digital and print marketing materials. Ambassadors collaborate closely with local American Heart Association representatives to ensure they are matched with ambassador opportunities that align with their interests and comfort levels, empowering them to advocate for heart health in their communities.



Programs & Councils

Simon's Heart Student Ambassador Program

Throughout the Simon's Heart's Student Ambassador Program, young advocates participate in events, lead projects, and work to increase awareness of sudden cardiac arrest within their schools and communities.

The program begins annually every January and includes bi-weekly meetings held via Zoom. During these meetings, ambassadors collaborate, share ideas, and contribute their thoughts and skills to plan impactful events. Participants are expected to attend these meetings, work together in smaller groups, join at least one planning committee, and attend or assist with the CPR Jukebox Marathon, a key event for raising awareness about life-saving CPR skills.

Ambassadors are also given fundraising goals, with each student aiming to raise \$1,000 individually, while the group collectively strives for a total of \$25,000.

For students interested in joining, signing up is easy—simply send an email to info@simonsheart.org to get started.

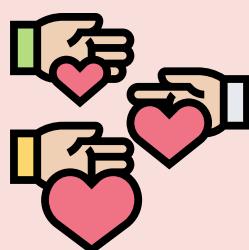


Atrium Health Young Ambassadors Program

The Atrium Health Young Ambassadors Program celebrates the philanthropic efforts of kids and teens who make a difference in the lives of Atrium Health patients. Young ambassadors raise funds and organize events such as lemonade stands, bake sales, and birthday donation campaigns, demonstrating leadership and selflessness.

This program provides opportunities for youth to actively support patients through creative fundraising initiatives. Aspiring ambassadors are encouraged to get involved, with opportunities to showcase their efforts during the annual Young Ambassadors celebration.

To join or nominate a young ambassador, contact Kayla Baker at Kayla.Baker@atriumhealth.org.



Programs & Councils

ACC Young Scholars Program

The ACC Young Scholars Program offers high school and undergraduate students the chance to explore careers in cardiology, science, and healthcare. Aimed at bright students who may not otherwise have access to such opportunities, the program provides year-long exposure to education, research, mentorship, and networking specific to cardiovascular medicine.

Organized by the Academic Cardiology Member Section and local State Chapters of the ACC, this initiative introduces students to the cardiology field, helping to cultivate the future workforce. Participants engage in virtual sessions and are paired with mentors from the ACC to gain insight, grow professionally, and build connections.

Some students will have the chance to attend an in-person ACC conference, where they can present their research, meet global experts, and attend sessions. Additionally, participants may visit hospitals or attend State Chapter meetings to further expand their knowledge and experience in cardiology.

You Belong in Cardiology

You Belong in Cardiology is a mentorship and career exploration program aimed at increasing diversity within the cardiology field by addressing the underrepresentation of women and minority physicians and allied professionals. The program targets 10th-grade students who are racial or ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+, first-generation college-bound, or come from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. It offers participants exposure to cardiology through four interactive group sessions, including hands-on CPR training and heart dissections.

Students are also paired with cardiologists and fellows who provide ongoing mentorship, helping to guide their career paths in the field. The goal is to foster long-term mentorship relationships, spark interest in cardiology, and diversify the pipeline of future cardiologists.



Programs & Councils

I Look Like a Cardiologist

I Look Like a Cardiologist is an online mentorship program designed to inspire and guide high school students from diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in cardiology. The program consists of four live 75-minute sessions held in January, where students explore the field of cardiology, learn about its impact on communities, and hear from a diverse group of practicing cardiologists.

Each student is paired with a single mentor, fostering close relationships that often lead to ongoing guidance and advice. Students also engage in small group discussions every week, where they can connect with other aspiring cardiologists in their region and interact with mentors.

The program covers essential cardiology topics through Cardiology 101, which introduces students to cardiac anatomy, the different types of cardiology practices, and the technologies shaping the field. Students also participate in an Issue Simulation that tackles case studies involving women, race, privilege, and medicine, guided by young physicians.



Research & Practice Opportunities

As you plan for your future in heart health, pursuing research in cardiology and public health can open doors to exciting opportunities. Whether you're considering a bachelor's degree in public health or aiming for advanced studies with a Master's or Doctor of Public Health degree, research and practice are powerful ways to deepen your understanding of cardiovascular disease prevention. Below are some research and practice opportunities where you can build your foundation for a career focused on heart disease prevention and public health!

Undergraduate Research Experiences in Cardiology at Duke

The Duke Cardiovascular Research Center offers three Undergraduate Research Experience opportunities for students interested in cardiovascular research. This 10-week, in-person summer program provides hands-on research opportunities, allowing students to work directly with Duke faculty members in cardiology.

To be eligible, applicants must be full-time undergraduates (rising sophomores, juniors, or seniors) at Duke or another institution with an expressed interest in healthcare, and must have demonstrated exemplary academic performance.



AHA Summer Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Penn CVI

The American Heart Association Summer Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Penn CVI offers a 10-week, hands-on research experience for undergraduate students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds. The program focuses on cardiovascular research across areas like molecular biology, genetics, physiology, and clinical studies. Running in the summer, students will work with faculty mentors, participate in seminars, and present their findings at a summer symposium. This program is ideal for students interested in pursuing advanced biomedical degrees.



The fellowship is open to junior or senior students from four-year universities or recent graduates, with a \$6,000 stipend and partial housing support. Students must commit to the full 10-week program and engage in 40 hours per week of lab activities. Applications are encouraged from diverse backgrounds, including first-generation college students and those from disadvantaged communities.

Research & Practice Opportunities

Cardiovascular Research Internship Program at Emory

The Emory Cardiology Research Internship Program provides medical and post-graduate students with hands-on experience in clinical and translational research. The program aims to deepen interns' understanding of clinical research, focusing on areas such as human subjects' safety, data analysis, ethics, and regulatory requirements. Interns work closely with experienced investigators, research coordinators, and cardiology fellows on various clinical research projects.

Eligibility requires a Bachelor's Degree in medicine, biology, chemistry, nursing, public health, or biomedical engineering, advanced proficiency in English, and U.S. citizenship or permanent residency. Applicants must commit to a minimum of six months and can extend their internship for up to 24 months. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.



Stanford CVI Summer Research Program

The Stanford Cardiovascular Institute (CVI) Summer Research Program is a 10-week opportunity designed to provide undergraduate and medical students with meaningful research experiences in cardiovascular science. The program aims to increase diversity in the field of cardiovascular research and medicine by supporting students from various backgrounds.



Trainees will spend 80% of their time working on a research project in the lab of a Stanford faculty mentor, focusing on areas such as precision medicine, cardiothoracic surgery, health disparities, pulmonary research, heart failure, rhythm disorders, and clinical trials. The remaining 20% of the program is dedicated to a comprehensive curriculum, including scientific seminars, career development workshops, and networking opportunities.

Supported by the American Heart Association, NIH, and the Stanford Cardiovascular Institute, the program offers a stipend ranging from \$5,000 to \$8,000 depending on funding and whether the participation is virtual or in-person.

Research & Practice Opportunities

New York State Department of Health

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) plays a key role in CVD prevention through various bureaus focused on chronic disease, environmental health, and health equity. The **Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention** leads statewide efforts to reduce heart disease risk through hypertension awareness programs, healthy eating and active living initiatives, and tobacco control policies. The **Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology** examines environmental factors such as air quality and workplace conditions that contribute to CVD risk. The **Office of Health Equity and Human Rights** ensures that underserved communities have access to equitable healthcare. The **Bureau of Data Analytics, Research and Evaluation** supports epidemiological research and public health studies to guide policy decisions.

For students pursuing careers in public health and cardiology, NYSDOH offers valuable research and internship opportunities in chronic disease epidemiology, health policy analysis, and community health initiatives. These experiences provide hands-on exposure to public health research, health education, and advocacy, reinforcing the importance of early intervention and prevention strategies in reducing the burden of heart disease.

New York State Public Health Corps Fellowship Program

The New York State Public Health Corps (NYSPHC) Fellowship Program is designed to enhance and apply public health knowledge by offering paid, full-time positions that include professional development, training, and mentorship. The program aims to develop a diverse and robust public health workforce across New York State, responding to current and future public health challenges. Fellows gain valuable experience through their work with host organizations like the State Department of Health and Local Health Departments, and their professional networks grow as they contribute to advancing health equity in various communities.

The Fellowship also includes an educational series focused on core competencies such as equity, change management, and data-based decision-making. Fellows are encouraged to engage in statewide consortia, mentorship opportunities, and an annual summit to further strengthen their skills and connect with leaders in the public health field, contributing to a better-prepared workforce for public health emergencies.



Youth Advocacy

As a youth advocate, you have the power to drive change and raise awareness about heart health in your community and beyond. By speaking up, sharing your story, and taking action, you can influence policies, promote healthy lifestyles, and ensure that young people's voices are heard.

AHA You're the Cure

The You're the Cure grassroots network, established by the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association, empowers individuals to advocate for heart-healthy and stroke-smart policies. For over 30 years, the program has brought together people from all walks of life—fathers, mothers, neighbors, friends, researchers, and caregivers—working collectively to address heart disease and stroke, the nation's No. 1 and No. 5 killers.

The program offers tools for youth to become active advocates for public health policies at local, state, and national levels. By participating in advocacy activities, students can communicate with legislators, connect with local advocates, and track their impact. Participants earn points as they engage in activities, reaching new ranks and receiving badges for significant achievements.



Mended Hearts Action Network

The Mended Hearts ACTION NETWORK™ empowers patients and caregivers to advocate for heart disease patients through policy change and awareness. As part of the nation's premier peer-support program for those with heart disease, members receive updates and action alerts to raise their voices for the heart patient community.



The Mended Hearts ACTION NETWORK Champions are a select group of dedicated advocates who play a key role in driving these efforts. Champions engage with legislators, participate in training webinars, and connect with fellow advocates in a closed social media group. They also commit 2-2.5 hours a week to further the mission. A standout opportunity for Champions is Hill Day, where selected advocates travel to Capitol Hill to meet lawmakers and push for critical heart disease policies and funding.

Youth Advocacy

Project ADAM

Project ADAM helps schools, sports programs, and community organizations become Heart Safe by equipping them with the resources needed to respond to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) in those critical first moments. By ensuring communities are properly prepared with the right equipment, training, and an action plan, Project ADAM empowers them to save lives. Local affiliates provide guidance and support to help organizations become Heart Safe, offering access to training, equipment, and the tools necessary to respond effectively during an emergency. In addition, Project ADAM advocates for legislation that gives communities the tools and authority to better address SCA incidents.



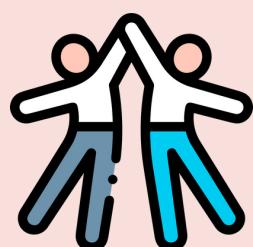
Conquering CHD

Conquering CHD is the collective voice of the congenital heart disease (CHD) community, empowering individuals to advocate for those affected by CHD. Through storytelling and active involvement, advocates help drive change with lawmakers, doctors, and researchers. By joining Conquering CHD, you gain access to resources, regular updates on CHD policy, and alerts for urgent action. The organization also provides personalized opportunities to get involved based on local and regional needs. One key opportunity is the [Heart Connection Conference](#), an annual event where patients, families, and medical professionals unite to educate members of Congress about CHD. Advocacy training, including tips on contacting lawmakers and sharing your story, is also available.

SAHM Advocacy

The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) advocates for policies that improve the health and well-being of adolescents. Members of SAHM work at local, state, national, and international levels to support efforts that enhance access to high-quality health services for youth. They regularly create position papers and statements addressing critical health issues that affect young people.

SAHM is dedicated to promoting high standards of care for adolescents, raising awareness among healthcare professionals, policymakers, and youth organizations, and helping parents understand their children's healthcare needs. Members can participate in virtual advocacy, write position papers, and issue press releases and statements to stay informed and involved in advancing policies that benefit adolescent health.



Youth Advocacy

AstraZeneca Young Health Program

The Young Health Program (YHP) aims to make youth health, particularly non-communicable disease (NCD) prevention, a global government priority. In partnership with UNICEF, YHP leverages its networks with decision-makers at national and global levels to advocate for this important cause. Central to this effort is the involvement of young leaders, whose energy, skills, and on-the-ground experience are essential in driving effective advocacy.

YHP's activities contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal Target 3.4, which aims to reduce premature deaths linked to NCDs by one-third by 2030, while promoting mental health and wellbeing. The program seeks to raise global awareness about NCD risks and behaviors, with the goal of reaching 5 million adolescents with prevention messages. Additionally, YHP empowers young people to advocate for policies that address their health and well-being, providing training to 1,000 youth advocates to promote NCD prevention at local, national, and global levels.



Citizens' Committee for Children

The Citizens' Committee for Children (CCC) advocates for equitable access to high-quality health and behavioral services for all children in New York City, from infancy through young adulthood. CCC's priorities include expanding access to comprehensive healthcare through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and they work to ensure that every child receives preventive care, that behavioral health services are available in schools and communities, and that families have access to healthy, affordable food. By focusing on these areas, CCC aims to promote the well-being and healthy development of all children in NYC.

Community Catalyst

Community Catalyst advocates for a health system centered around people, not profit. The organization has been instrumental in advancing policies like the Affordable Care Act, expanding Medicaid, and improving Medicare, while building a nationwide network of partners advocating for affordable and accessible healthcare. Community Catalyst believes in health justice and a system rooted in racial equity, working alongside local, state, and national partners to create a health system that serves all communities. Youth interested in heart health can get involved from a cardiovascular health equity standpoint.



Conferences

Conferences are a fantastic way to dive deeper into heart health, stay updated on the latest research, and connect with experts in the field. By participating in these events, you'll gain valuable knowledge, share ideas with others, and build a network of like-minded individuals who are passionate about promoting heart health.

[International Stroke Conference](#)

[Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Annual Meeting](#)

[Epidemiology, Prevention, Lifestyle & Cardiometabolic Health](#)

[Cardiovascular Research Technologies](#)

[ACC Annual Scientific Session](#)

[Heart Rhythm](#)

[Cardio World Congress](#)

[European Society of Cardiology Congress](#)

[Hypertension](#)

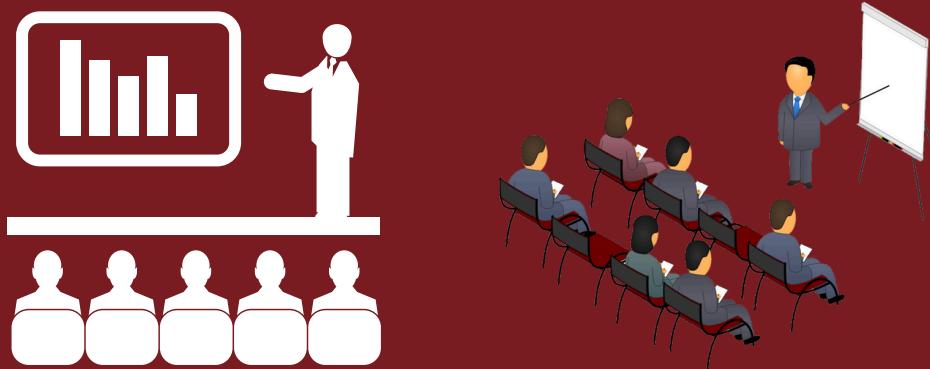
[Cardiology World Congress](#)

[American Public Health Association Annual Meeting & Expo](#)

[New York State Public Health Partnership Conference](#)

[AHA Scientific Sessions](#)

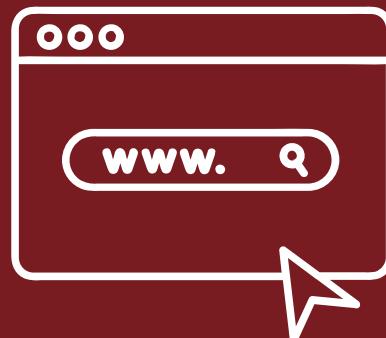
[American College of Lifestyle Medicine Annual Conference](#)



Journals

For anyone passionate about heart health, exploring academic and professional journals is an excellent way to stay informed about the latest research, trends, and advancements in the field of cardiology. These journals offer in-depth articles, studies, and reviews on a wide range of topics—from cardiovascular disease prevention and treatment to the latest breakthroughs in medical technology and heart failure management. Whether you're a student, healthcare professional, or simply someone interested in heart health, reading these journals will provide valuable insights into the science behind heart disease and its impact on individuals and communities. Below is a list of top journals to explore for cutting-edge research in cardiovascular health.

- [Journal of the American Heart Association](#)
- [Journal of the American College of Cardiology](#)
- [American Journal of Cardiology](#)
- [European Heart Journal](#)
- [European Journal of Heart Failure](#)
- [European Journal of Preventive Cardiology](#)
- [American Journal of Preventive Cardiology](#)
- [American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine](#)
- [Current Problems in Cardiology](#)
- [Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine](#)
- [Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine](#)
- [Basic Research in Cardiology](#)
- [Nature Reviews Cardiology](#)
- [Nature Cardiovascular Research](#)
- [Canadian Journal of Cardiology](#)
- [Circulation Research](#)
- [Current Hypertension Reports](#)
- [Hypertension Research](#)
- [Cardiovascular Research](#)
- [Heart Rhythm](#)
- [Circulation](#)
- [International Journal of Cardiology](#)
- [Journal of Cardiac Failure](#)
- [Journal of Adolescent Health](#)
- [JAMA Cardiology](#)



Podcasts

For those who prefer learning on the go, podcasts are a fantastic resource for staying informed about heart health in an engaging and accessible format. With a wide range of shows dedicated to cardiovascular health, these podcasts offer expert insights, real-life stories, and practical advice on topics such as heart disease prevention, healthy living, kids nutrition, physical activity, sports safety, and other critical information for youth delivered straight to your ears.

- [Podcast Network – American Heart Association](#)
- [Love Your Heart – Cleveland Clinic](#)
- [Pediheart: Pediatric Cardiology Today – Robert Pass](#)
- [Cardi-OH Radio – Ohio Cardiovascular & Diabetes Health Collaborative](#)
- [Get Heart Healthy – Northwestern Medicine](#)
- [Holistic Heart Disease Prevention – Franciscan Health](#)
- [Primordial CVD Prevention, Maternal Health, and Advocacy to Improve Outcomes Now & Into the Future – Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association](#)
- [DocTalk Podcast – MedStar Health](#)
- [Why Heart Attacks Are on the Rise in Younger People – University Hospitals](#)
- [Keeping Your Child's Heart Healthy – Cornell](#)
- [CardioNerds Cardiovascular Prevention Series – American Society for Preventive Cardiology](#)
- [Conversations Like No Other - Heart Care Podcast – Valley Health System](#)
- [Kids Nutrition Podcast – Bahee Van de Bor](#)
- [The Youth Fitness Podcast – Jeff and Mikki Martin](#)
- [Healthy Youth Sports – National Youth Sports Health & Safety Institute](#)



Books



Books offer a unique and accessible way to learn about heart health, whether you're seeking to understand complex medical topics, exploring personal stories of resilience, or introducing children to the world of cardiology. Reading about heart disease, treatments, and personal journeys can be both educational and inspiring. The books listed below provide a diverse range of perspectives—from heart health for kids and families to the remarkable history of heart surgery and the science behind heart disease.

- Curious George Goes to the Hospital by H.A. Rey
- Matty's Heart: A Child's and Parents Guide to Open Heart Surgery by Jean Clabough, RN
- Pump the Bear by Gisella Olivo Whittington
- Christiaan Barnard and the Story of the First Successful Heart Transplant by John Bankston
- The Heart: The Questions and Answers Book for Kids by J. Willis Hurst
- Lindsay's Big Heart by Lindsay Davis and Srihari Naidu
- Nathan's Special Heart by Jessica Ennis
- It's My Heart by the Children's Heart Foundation
- Cardiology for Kids: Heart to Heart by Pencil Pen Press
- Robert Jarvik and the First Artificial Heart (Unlocking the Secrets of Science) by John Bankston
- Young People and Chronic Illness: True Stories, Help and Hope by Kelly Huegel
- Kara Mia: The Story of Sudden Loss & Slow Recovery in a Teenager with Long QT Syndrome by Maryann Anglim
- Heart Defects in Children: What Every Parent Should Know by Cheryl J. Wild
- Heart of a Child by Catherine A. Neill, Edward B. Clark, and Carleen Clark
- The Heart of a Mother by Anna Marie Jaworski and Judy Norwood



Parent Resources

As a parent, navigating the complexities of heart health for your child can feel overwhelming, especially if your child is diagnosed with a heart condition or facing surgery. Fortunately, there are numerous resources available to support families through every step of the journey—from understanding heart disease to accessing vital care and emotional support. The organizations and institutions listed below offer educational materials, counseling services, and guidance tailored specifically for parents and caregivers. Whether you're seeking information on pediatric heart care, healthy lifestyle tips, or advice on managing heart-related challenges, these resources provide valuable tools to help you make informed decisions and support your child's heart health.

- [Parent Heart Watch](#)
- [Doenbercher Children's Hospital Pediatric Heart Care](#)
- [USDA Family Resources](#)
- [Children's Hospital Colorado Heart Resources for Families](#)
- [Fetal Heart Society Guide for Parents](#)
- [Pediatric Heart Network Helpful Resources](#)
- [Heart Failure Society of America Educational Resources](#)
- [Cincinnati Children's Hospital Patient and Family Resources](#)
- [CookChildren's Heart Center Educational Resources](#)
- [Mary Bridge Children's Resources for Families](#)
- [CDC Cardiovascular Disease Data, Tools, and Evaluation Resources](#)

Teacher Resources

As an educator, you play a crucial role in shaping students' understanding of heart health and inspiring them to adopt lifelong healthy habits. With the right resources, you can make learning about the heart fun, engaging, and informative. Whether you're teaching elementary students about the basics of cardiovascular health or helping older students understand complex heart conditions, there are plenty of materials available to support your teaching efforts. The resources listed below provide lesson plans, activities, and interactive tools designed to educate students about heart health, raise awareness, and encourage healthy behaviors.

- [KidsHealth for Educators](#)
- [Health EDCO Products, Models, & Displays](#)
- [Shape America Heart Healthy Activities](#)
- [Project Heart Resources](#)
- [Teachers Pay Teachers Heart Health Activities](#)
- [MVP Healthcare Heart Health Education Series](#)
- [Your Beating Heart Lesson Plan](#)
- [Health Powered Kids Healthy Heart Lesson](#)
- [Jump Rope for Heart Education Resources](#)
- [Elementary School Teacher's Resource Guide](#)
- [Lesson Planet Cardiovascular Health Lesson Plans](#)



Call to Action

The path to a heart-healthy future starts with us. This guide is your toolkit to help you make healthier choices today—whether it's choosing more nutritious foods, becoming more active, managing stress, or speaking out about the importance of cardiovascular health. You have the power to lead by example, educate your peers, and challenge the status quo by building a culture of heart health in your community.

But don't stop there. We also invite you to take your commitment further by getting involved with local programs, joining organizations, and finding internships or advocacy opportunities where your voice can make an even bigger impact. You can attend conferences, contribute to youth councils, share your passion for heart health with others, and think ahead to college and your career. This is your chance to become a leader for change, a champion for the heart health of your generation and beyond.

Together, let us shift from a reactive, treatment-based approach to a proactive, preventive one. By making small, consistent changes today, we can reduce the risk of heart disease tomorrow—not just for ourselves, but for future generations where every young person has the opportunity to live a long, healthy life with a strong, healthy heart.

