

# The American Heart Association's Council on Cardiovascular Surgery and Anesthesia

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The American Heart Association (AHA) is the largest volunteer and charitable organization whose mission is to reduce death and disability from cardiovascular diseases and stroke. In 2000, the AHA established a strategic goal of reducing death, disability, and risk by 25% by the year 2010. Most people are familiar with the local fund raising efforts of the AHA in terms of heart walks or mini-marathons, school activities such as "Jump Rope for Heart", heart galas and auctions, mailing campaigns, and the more recent "Go Red For Women" programs. The average donation received by the AHA is less than \$25. However, the success of the combined fund-raising programs permits support of four major areas from a scientific and health care standpoint:

1. Scientific research funding from AHA national and AHA regional affiliates (\$142 million in 2005) is largely targeted toward young investigators and early career research support. Funding distribution was 68% basic research, 26% clinical research and 6% population research.
2. Public health education (\$216 million in 2005) is directed toward increasing public awareness of cardiovascular disease and stroke risk reduction and treatment options. This includes lay press information, web-based learning tools, educational pamphlets often used in hospitals and physician's offices, community presentations and speakers.
3. Professional education and training (\$72 million in 2005) includes scientific conferences, development of scientific statements and evidence-based practice guidelines, scientific journals and web-based learning tools.
4. Community services (\$44 million in 2005) efforts provide information and services to underserved and high risk populations.

The AHA's Council on Cardiovascular Surgery and Anesthesia is one of 13 Scientific Councils. Our mission is to improve the application of established surgical procedures and anesthetic techniques, increase awareness of new issues in the field of cardiovascular surgery and anesthesia, and disseminate new knowledge to increase the number of patients who may benefit from surgical treatment in safer and more effective ways.

Our Council is committed to supporting young investigators. We provide funding for the AHA's Student Scholarships in Cardiovascular Disease and Stroke. We sponsor the Vivien Thomas Young Investigator Awards competition which provides travel stipends and financial awards to those finalists who are chosen to present their work at the annual Sci-

entific Sessions. Earlier this year, we provided a rationale to the NHLBI regarding the importance of the relative time for research versus clinical commitments for our specialties for whom clinical and technical skills are paramount. We were joined in this effort by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the American Association for Thoracic Surgery, and the Thoracic Surgery Foundation for Research and Education. We recently received notice that the NHLBI has agreed to reduce the research time percentage from 75% to "50-75%" for clinically-oriented specialists to apply for K08 and K23 training grants.

Membership in our Council has the following benefits:

- Online access to the AHA's scientific journals including *Circulation*, *Stroke*, *Circulation Research* as well as reduced subscription fees
- Reduced registration fees to AHA-sponsored scientific conferences and meetings including the annual Scientific Sessions
- Early registration opportunities for Scientific Sessions
- Access to the online Council membership directory
- Opportunities to serve on AHA and Council committees. This includes opportunities to serve on writing groups for AHA scientific statements, science advisories, practice guidelines; program committees for scientific conferences
- The quarterly Council Connections newsletter

Our Council sponsors the Surgical Supplement to *Circulation* which contains peer-reviewed papers presented at Council sponsored sessions at the annual Scientific Sessions. Abstract presenters at Council-sponsored sessions may submit papers for review.

Over 400,000 patients have cardiac and vascular surgery each year. The daily interactions of cardiac and vascular surgeons and cardiovascular anesthesiologists are a natural starting point for our Council to develop new programs and enhance existing ones.

Thanks to your Society's leadership for the opportunity to place our Council's message before you in this newsletter. Please feel free to contact your Society's representatives to our Council's Leadership Committee (Christina Mora Mangano, [cmoraman@stanford.edu](mailto:cmoraman@stanford.edu) and Jerrold Levy, [jerrold.levy@emoryhealthcare.org](mailto:jerrold.levy@emoryhealthcare.org)) or me ([lfhcvts@aol.com](mailto:lfhcvts@aol.com)) regarding the value of membership and participation in our Council. More information regarding the American Heart Association and our Council can be found at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) and the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists website.