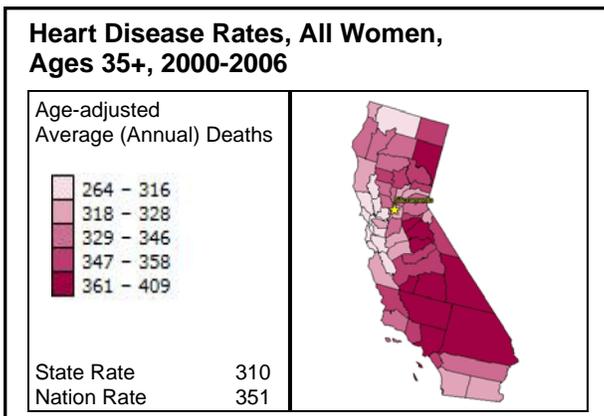


# FACTS

## Women and Cardiovascular Disease: CALIFORNIA

- Heart disease and stroke account for **31.7%** of all female deaths in California.
- On average, almost **100** women die from heart disease and stroke in California each day.



- Heart disease alone is the **leading** cause of death in California, accounting for **28,370** female deaths in 2009.
- Stroke is the **No. 3** cause of death for females in California, accounting for **7,841** female deaths in 2007.
- Nearly **54.8%** of women in California are obese and overweight.
- In California, **9.2%** of women smoke cigarettes.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mortality data based on WISQARS Leading Cause of Death Reports, 2009; state maps from the Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention; risk factor data from the BRFSS, 2010.

\* Overweight is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of 25.0-29.9 kg/m<sup>2</sup> and obese is defined as having a BMI of 30.0 kg/m<sup>2</sup> or greater.

### Dr. Susan Mahler, California Survivor

In 2003, Susan Mahler had just retired from 35 years as an educator, first as a teacher and then as a principal in the San Diego area. Excited about retirement and all that it had to promise, everything suddenly changed. After experiencing difficulty with breathing, Susan found herself in the hospital having one heart valve repaired and another valve replaced. During that procedure the surgeon discovered that the entire left side of her heart muscle was gray and flabby and her heart was greatly enlarged. Susan's family was told she had one week to live and needed a heart transplant. Instead, with medication, the improved functioning of her heart valves, and a defibrillator, she was able to walk out of that hospital one week later.

Susan remained on the transplant list for five months when it was decided that she no longer needed that lifesaving procedure. However, in 2009, the Congestive Heart Failure spread from the left side of the heart to the right, which was causing many of her organs to shut down. Susan went back on the transplant list in April, 2010 and was blessed with a new heart on June 20, 2010. This miracle is the result of her positive determination, her faith, the love of her family, and the unbelievable expertise and skills of her medical teams.

Today, Susan is living her retirement to its fullest. Six months after her transplant she was skiing at Lake Tahoe! Susan became very involved with the San Diego office of the American Heart Association in 2003 after her first survival. In fact, Susan is convinced that she has survived twice because of the amazing medical advances that have come from research funded by the American Heart Association. Susan serves on the Heart Association Board and has become a major spokesperson in San Diego for the AHA – a platform that has enabled her to help raise awareness about women and heart disease and stroke.