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SDCMS FOUNDATION REJOINS *LOVE YOUR HEART DAY* COLLABORATION TO PROVIDE FREE BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENINGS ACROSS SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Local Charity Helps SD County Residents Take Charge of Their Heart Health on Feb 11

SAN DIEGO, February 9, 2016 – The San Diego County Medical Society Foundation (SDCMS Foundation; www.sdcmf.org), its volunteers and leaders in medicine, will again join the *Love Your Heart Day* 1-day event on February 11, to provide free blood pressure screenings across San Diego County. In addition to screenings at physician offices, clinics and hospitals, SDCMS Foundation will coordinate community based screening outreach at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, Northgate González Markets, YMCA’s across San Diego County, and other non-medical locations, to screen populations who have difficulty accessing medical care. Now in its fifth year, this collaborative effort was launched by San Diego County’s Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) and its *Live Well San Diego* initiative. This year, the event’s goal is 25,000+ screenings to increase San Diegan’s awareness of their blood pressure values to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Residents are always encouraged to “know their numbers” and keep careful track of their blood pressure. High blood pressure can easily go unnoticed and can occur with virtually no symptoms. When left untreated, high blood pressure can lead to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, heart disease, and vision and memory loss, among other serious conditions. The risk for high blood pressure increases with age, and is more likely to occur in those individuals with high cholesterol, hereditary predisposition or diabetes, as well as in those who smoke, are obese, or are physically inactive. For a map of sites where free blood pressure screenings will be available across San Diego County on Friday, Feb. 11, visit www.loveyourheartsd.org.

Last year, SDCMS Foundation joined the County of San Diego’s *Love Your Heart Day* event and facilitated 1,700 free blood pressure screenings by implementing community based screenings with partners including Northgate González Markets, the Mexican Consulate, National City Kimball Towers, and other schools, churches, and senior centers. Equally as important was support from physician volunteers and medical professionals, many of whom hosted free blood pressure screenings at their medical offices.

About the San Diego County Medical Society Foundation (SDCMS Foundation)

Founded by the San Diego County Medical Society (SDCMS) in 2005, the SDCMS Foundation addresses unmet healthcare needs of low-income San Diego County residents who are uninsured or underinsured. SDCMS Foundation focuses on increasing healthcare access, improving health education and prevention, and supporting the future of medicine. Through its flagship program, Project Access San Diego, SDCMS Foundation has assisted over 4,508 patients to access specialty healthcare services. Healthcare partners, including over 625 specialty medical



physicians, 25 hospitals and surgery centers, and numerous imaging, laboratory and ancillary providers, have provided patients with more than \$10.7 million in donated healthcare services. For more information about SDCMS Foundation please visit www.sdcmf.org.

About Live Well San Diego

Live Well San Diego (www.livewellsd.org) is a health initiative mobilized by the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors and run by the County's HHSA. The decision was sparked by the realization that San Diego County, like much of the nation, was facing a tidal wave of chronic disease and rising healthcare costs. San Diego County's Board of Supervisors recognized that without taking bold, deliberate action, the next generation of San Diegans would be in danger of living shorter, less healthy lives than the current generation.