

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LT. GOVERNOR BOLLING ANNOUNCES 44 PERCENT DROP IN
VIRGINIA'S HEART ATTACK DEATH RATE OVER LAST TEN YEARS**

(RICHMOND, Va.)—Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling announced today that Virginia's Acute Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) mortality rates have declined 44 percent from 1998-2008.

“Through strong and collaborative efforts in both the public and private sector, Virginia has achieved great success in reducing the rates of death from heart attacks,” said Lt. Governor Bolling. “With cardiovascular disease the leading cause of death in the Commonwealth, this is good news. However, we need to keep working hard to get out the message that eating a balanced diet and getting more exercise can help reduce the risk of heart disease significantly.”

The Lt. Governor was joined by State Health Commissioner, Karen Remley, MD, MBA and Charles Frazier, MD, president of Virginia Health Information.

“This 44 percent decline means that 1,347 fewer Virginians died from heart attacks in 2008 than in 1998,” said Dr. Remley. “Not only has the mortality rate dropped significantly, there has also been an 18 percent decline in heart attack hospitalization rates. As we applaud the overall reduction in the heart disease death rate, the rate of cardiac mortality in the African American community is higher than all other races. Therefore, we must continue to work hard as a community through education, innovation and access for cardiac care and heart disease prevention for all our citizens.”

Virginia Health Information offers a free resource tool at www.vhi.org for citizens seeking information about their heart care options and treatment choices. “One of the best ways to improve your health is to arm yourself with information,” said Dr. Charles Frazier. “Knowing your medical history and understanding your options are important in choosing the best cardiac care.”

Heart disease is related to many health issues such as diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and stroke. Efforts to combat these factors require working collaboration between Virginia's physicians, EMS, hospitals, American Heart Association, health plans and citizens taking personal responsibility for healthy lifestyle choices.