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At 2014 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting, Seafood Nutrition Partnership Announces Pilot Program to Reduce Women's Heart Disease Risks

NEW YORK – At the 10th Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Annual Meeting, the nonprofit Seafood Nutrition Partnership (SNP) announced the successful launch of a pilot program called Eating Heart Healthy: A Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Program for Women. The announcement of the program—designed to help women understand and mitigate their risk of heart disease through a seafood-rich diet—served as SNP's Commitment to Action, a plan for addressing significant global challenges made by CGI members.

The Eating Heart Healthy pilot program, launched in June 2014, was conducted in partnership with two Boston-based organizations: Brigham & Women's Hospital (BWH), a major teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School and consistently recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the nation's top hospitals; and Roxbury Tenants of Harvard (RTH), a 2,000-resident community providing affordable housing for low- and moderate-income people of diverse backgrounds.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the leading cause of death for women in the United States is cardiovascular disease (CVD). Therefore, female residents of the RTH community with at least some risk of CVD were pre-screened to qualify for the program. The objective of the program was to help these women build skills to incorporate healthy fats and nutrient-dense foods into daily meals, with the long-term goal of lowering their risk for CVD and increasing awareness of heart health.

At the start of the pilot program, participants were surveyed to gauge their baseline knowledge of heart-healthy practices and to determine their current level of seafood consumption. (The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Health and Human Services' dietary guidelines recommend that Americans eat seafood twice a week; this level has been shown to reduce risks of dying from CVD by 36%, according to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.)

With guidance from Dr. JoAnne Foody, medical director for the Pollin Cardiovascular Wellness Center at BWH, the participants were also measured for factors ranging from weight and BMI to blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids—an important supporting nutrient for heart health, one found primarily in fish and seafood. "One of the most significant scientific findings was a general low level of omega-3 fatty acids in our first group of participants," said Dr. Foody.

Participants then attended talks on cardiovascular health and food budgeting presented by BWH, and engaged in a series of interactive cooking sessions led by Kelly Armetta, executive chef at Hyatt Regency Boston. Over the course of the program, Chef Armetta demonstrated eight simple, affordable seafood-based recipes, each costing around \$10 to feed a family of four. "I was very encouraged to hear that the women have been sharing the recipes with their family, friends and neighbors," said Chef Armetta.

According to Aileen Sauris, nurse practitioner at BWH, early feedback from program participants has been positive. The women have expressed to her that they are "feeling more energetic and making positive lifestyle changes," she reported. Post-program, the participants will receive follow-up surveys and health screenings over the course of one year to measure long-term progress in health knowledge and in overall physical health.

"The Eating Heart Healthy program is an effective way to achieve our critical goals of supporting a healthy and vibrant community," said RTH Executive Director Karen Gately. "The buzz around our community about the initial program has been impressive," added RTH Director of Program Development Roxanne Haecker. "I have a waiting list for the next program in October."



Dr. Judith Rodriguez, SNP board member and 85th president of the Academy for Nutrition and Dietetics, provided guidance for the development of the Eating Heart Healthy program curriculum. She credited part of the initial success of the program to its teaching method: “We believe the key to having a long-term impact is to ensure that healthy eating habits are taught not in an abstract way but in a very practical, grounded and engaging way, specifically designed for the adult learner.”

The Commitment to Action announced at the CGI Annual Meeting is just the beginning, according to Linda Cornish, executive director of SNP. “Eating Heart Healthy is the first of what we hope to be many examples of broad-based partnerships that address America’s public health crisis,” she said. “We are committed to building awareness of seafood-based omega-3 deficiencies in the U.S., and we’re excited for the opportunity to show more communities how adding seafood to one’s diet can be a simple, affordable and enjoyable way to help prevent chronic diseases. We invite interested partners to learn more about the program and to help us scale this to a national level, targeting communities with the greatest needs.”

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About Seafood Nutrition Partnership

Seafood Nutrition Partnership (SNP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to inspire a healthier America through partnerships that raise awareness about the essential nutritional benefits of eating seafood. Through its education efforts, the organization aims to help Americans gain the skills to select, order and prepare fish and shellfish, and to inspire a healthier America by promoting a nutrient-rich diet that includes seafood. SNP is a member of the Clinton Global Initiative and the NCD Roundtable. More information is available at SeafoodNutrition.org.

About the Clinton Global Initiative

Established in 2005 by President Bill Clinton, the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), an initiative of the Clinton Foundation, convenes global leaders to create and implement solutions to the world’s most pressing challenges. CGI Annual Meetings have brought together more than 180 heads of state, 20 Nobel Prize laureates, and hundreds of leading CEOs, heads of foundations and NGOs, major philanthropists, and members of the media. To date, members of the CGI community have made more than 2,900 commitments, which are already improving the lives of more than 430 million people in over 180 countries.

CGI also convenes CGI America, a meeting focused on collaborative solutions to economic recovery in the United States, and CGI University (CGI U), which brings together undergraduate and graduate students to address pressing challenges in their community or around the world. For more information, visit clintonglobalinitiative.org.