

**May 4-10, 2025**

# **HEART FAILURE AWARENESS WEEK**



## Event Planning Kit

## INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Heart Failure Society, in collaboration with its' partners, designates a week in May yearly as Heart Failure Awareness Week. The goal of the National Heart Failure Awareness Week is to raise awareness, increase public knowledge, and provide a better understanding of this chronic condition.

Heart failure cases continue to rise. Over 750,000 people live with heart failure in Canada, and this number increases by 100,000 every year. Heart failure affects people of all ages. Even though cases of heart failure are on the rise, many people in Canada do not understand heart failure or do not even know what heart failure is. More so than ever before, excellent therapeutic opportunities exist to manage heart failure. There is opportunity to improve diagnosis and utilization of guideline directed therapy for heart failure. There are opportunities to improve access to high quality care in Canada and to improve continuity of care through different transitions in care. With these resources and opportunities, the **“TIME IS NOW TO TAKE ACTION.”** We must increase national awareness about the severity of this condition.

## PURPOSE OF THE EVENT PLANNING KIT

The purpose of this kit is to assist you in preparing and conducting your own heart failure awareness event or activity to raise awareness, educate, and empower individuals to take action on heart failure.



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# PLANNING YOUR EVENT – MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS

## Identifying/setting up your planning committee and lead/chair of your event

Planning an event will need a group of dedicated individuals that will help you plan and carry out your event or activity. The purpose and intended audience of the event will help guide the membership.

### Planning committee members should include:

- Healthcare providers with subject matter expertise in heart failure
- Representation from the intended audience
- Patient or family caregivers with lived experience
- Local community/professional leader
- Person(s) with specialized knowledge/expertise for the type of event (e.g. logistical and technical support)
- Representation or someone to formally connect with the organization directly supporting National HF Awareness Week
- Representation from organization's communication/media department that is organizing the event
- Representation to help drive diversity within target audience and speakers presenters

**TIP:** It is essential to identify a chair or lead person. The chair will ensure that every step of the event's planning, execution, and evaluation is achieved smoothly.

## Establish your event goal and objectives

- What is the purpose?
- What do you hope to accomplish?
- How will the event benefit patients' care?
- What 2-3 action items do you hope the intended audience will feel empowered to consider after attending the event?

## Determine your target audience

Who do you want to attend your event?

The target audience may include:

- General public
- People at risk for heart failure
- Patients with heart failure and their informal caregivers
- Healthcare providers such as nurses, physicians, residents, students in healthcare, residents, or anyone involved in the care of people with heart failure
- Under-served communities

## Determine the type of event

**Suggestions for type of events:** There are several events or programs that you can plan to raise awareness, increase knowledge and understanding of this condition, and empower individuals to take action on heart failure.

Examples may include:

- Education programs such as workshops, seminars, and webinars
- Exhibits/displays at your institution, public places such as malls, libraries or other community centers
- Consider a hybrid approach for in-person and virtual format (facilitates access and ability to pivot in pandemic conditions)
- Participating in a radio talk about heart failure or radiothon if available
- Writing and submitting an article for publication in a local or community newspaper
- Participating or organizing a social media campaign
- Consider recording the event for later viewing by interested audiences (give consideration to privacy and intellectual property rules)

### **When determining the type of event, you want to consider the following:**

- Current local landscape and restrictions regarding the COVID-19 pandemic
- Type of event that would be most suited for the intended audience and purpose
- Opportunity for alignment with regularly scheduled events or activities with the intended audience (if applicable).

## Budget

Planning activities for heart failure awareness week could incur a cost depending on the type of activity being planned. A budget proposal will have to be completed, and funding sources will be identified.

### Potential expenses may include cost for:

- Graphic designs for invitations, posters, and handouts
- Licensing for virtual platform
- Printing
- Postage
- Venue rental
- Nourishment
- Publicizing/advertising
- Technical support or equipment (on-site and virtual environments)
- Invited speaker honorarium or incurred expenses

**TIP:** It is crucial to identify potential funding sources early on in your planning. A discussion about possible funding within your organization and your program is necessary. They may be able to provide you with information regarding other potential funding sources. Your organization may have policies regarding obtaining funding and sponsorships from private sources. It is essential to clarify this to prevent a potential breach of institutional policies.

Consider in-kind support to help offset expenses through partnering with other organizations (e.g., local community center, library) or healthcare facilities (e.g., other heart failure clinics, cardiac rehabilitation programs)

## Venue

The venue will depend on your target audience and the type of event.

**TIP:** If the event's target audience involves the public, people with heart failure, and their caregivers, consider a venue that will provide access to free and accessible parking. It is important to consider a place accessible to those with physical and other limitations.

For a virtual venue, plan for managing technical difficulties for presenters or the intended audience.

In a pandemic setting, local restrictions or regulations may change quickly. Plan to pivot to an alternative venue or arrangements where possible.

## Publicizing the event

You will need to inform your target audience directly about your program. It is critical to check with your institution/organization about the intended audience's policies and procedures for communicating (messaging and methods).

**Publicizing your event can be accomplished in several ways including:** Sending invitations by regular mail, email, social media, or given in person.

A sample invitation can be found **at [heartfailure.ca/national-heart-failure-awareness-week](http://heartfailure.ca/national-heart-failure-awareness-week)**.

**TIP:** Contact other facilities or programs for people with heart failure, such as different clinics, telemonitoring, cardiac rehabilitation, community or home services, and inform them of your event. Provide them also with copies of invitations and posters.

Ask community health programs, community pharmacies, and community centers to post your event's information in their facilities or on their website.

Consider sending a media release to various local radio/television stations and community newspapers, considering your institution's policy about media release.

This is a cost-effective way of publicizing your event.

Consider using various social media platforms to publicize your program, considering your institution's policy about social media. This is also a very cost-effective way of promoting your event.

# EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST/TIMELINE

This section will provide an outline of the logistics of your planning and will help keep you organized.

## 6-12 weeks before a local event

- Begin planning the event: Create a planning committee and appoint a chair
- Hold a brainstorming session to consider dates, sites, time, co-sponsors, and possible healthcare professionals to serve as program leaders (do this even further in advance if possible). The program leader could work as your emcee for your event/program and could be the spokesperson for the local heart failure awareness week and your event. It is essential that the spokesperson is very knowledgeable about heart failure and a good speaker
- Decide on topics for your program and speakers. Consider topics suggested by patients and caregivers/care providers. Contact potential speakers and confirm. Review sample PowerPoint presentation provided for potential topics
- If the event being recorded, notify speakers in advance. Written approval may be necessary
- Determine what is needed to ensure you are following current local public health pandemic guidelines
- Prepare a budget proposal for your event
- Contact possible co-sponsors, such as local hospitals and clinics, civic organizations, local associations, foundations
- Confirm the date and time of the event. Check calendar-of-events in your community or organization to ensure there are no other interfering programs.
- Visit potential venues and reserve or confirm the selected site. Confirm cost including AV equipment if the venue will provide AV equipment/technical support.
- Confirm sponsors or your funding sources
- Determine any potential conflict of interests
- Localize and produce flyers, invitations, and posters
- Prepare or order handouts for attendees

- Develop a list of local media outlets. Work with your organization's media person. Obtain a list of potential participants and community residents. This may include a list of your heart failure patients and caregivers
- Localize and produce press materials
- Localize and produce media alert
- Create an action plan with key dates and decision points regarding the need to pivot to a virtual environment in the setting of changing public health guidelines

### **3-5 weeks before the event**

- Post flyers and/or posters in the community
- Send promotional program materials to local media; send media releases.
- Work with your organization's media person
- Mail flyers and/or invitations to attendees
- Begin contacting reporters, particularly radio and newspaper- work with your organization's media person
- Reconfirm program leader and speakers
- Arrange/determine logistics: catering, audiovisual, direction to in-person event, public transportation, ensure that the venue is accessible to people with mobility limitations.
- Consider pre-recording virtual presentations for improving accessibility for rural and remote audiences

### **1-2 weeks before the event**

- Contact reporters at TV stations. Coordinate TV/radio invitations to your event spokesperson or program leader
- Send another press release- may be done by your organization media person
- Check all logistics, catering, table set up, number of microphones needed including a roving microphone for questions from the floor
- Prepare slide deck for all the presentations if you decide on having all presentations in one complete slide deck



- Create agenda/program for your event and print enough copies for attendees
- Prepare an attendance sheet if you are going to have people register for your event
- Prepare name tags for your committee members and speakers
- Assign someone to take pictures of your event. A photo release or waiver may be required

## **Day of Event**

- Be at the venue 2 hours before your event. Check set up and make necessary changes if needed
- Have copies of the agenda and evaluation form on the table
- Reserve tables for your speakers
- Check audiovisual (AV) to make sure it is working properly. Plan to have an individual who can troubleshoot AV problem during the presentation
- Ensure there are clear signs to direct people
- Wear planning committee name tags so attendees would know who to approach if they have questions
- Assign person at the registration desk
- Have members of the planning committee direct/usher attendees to their seats
- Ensure sufficient time for question-and-answer period for your audience

## **Post Event**

- Review evaluation forms: summarize feedback and distribute the feedback to your team, organization, and sponsors

# MATERIALS AND RESOURCES THAT YOU MAY NEED

**Invitation** - A sample invitation can be found [at heartfailure.ca/national-heart-failure-awareness-week](https://heartfailure.ca/national-heart-failure-awareness-week). Your invitation can also be formatted in a poster format which you could use for your advertising.

**Educational materials/handouts** - You may already have your own heart failure education pamphlets, which you could use as handouts for your attendees. Other health organizations in your province may use education materials essential to caring for people with heart failure. Please consider multilingual materials and handouts such as French or languages commonly spoken by your intended audience.

**Links to various organizations that may be able to help you are provided on heartfailure.ca.**

**Materials/slide deck for presentation** - Chosen speakers usually prepare presentation materials. Please discuss with your speakers what help they need to prepare for their presentations. You may want to use a specific slide format for your program. You will need to provide your speaker with a copy of the slide format. You may wish to have all your speakers' presentation slides in one complete slide deck for a seamless presentation. Assign someone in your program committee to put all the slides together before the day of the program.

**Social Media** - A selection of sample posts, graphics and hashtags you can use to promote your event can be found [on our website](#).

**Evaluation** - A sample evaluation is provided online. An evaluation is an important part of your event. This may help measure the success of your event and limitations as seen or felt by your target audience. Their comments will be helpful in your future event planning.