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**The Pressure is On for African Americans with Hypertension**

*External Pressures in Life Related to Jobs, Family and Finances Coincide with Neglect of a Critical Internal Pressure – High Blood Pressure*

Parsippany, NJ – June 10, 2009 – Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of African Americans with high blood pressure (also known as hypertension) say they worry more about their finances than their personal health, according to a new **'My Pressure Points'**<sup>TM</sup> national survey commissioned by Daiichi Sankyo, Inc., in collaboration with the Association of Black Cardiologists.<sup>1</sup> In addition, almost half (48 percent) are stressed about their work and careers.<sup>2</sup> Everyone juggles many external pressures in everyday life like jobs, finances and family care. But while those African Americans surveyed have increased their focus on the *external* pressures, have they lost sight of a critical *internal* pressure – one that can impact every facet of their lives? The survey was designed to test this hypothesis.

High blood pressure affects about 73 million adults (age 20 and older) in the U.S. and is often called the “silent killer”, with African Americans being more likely to develop the condition than any other racial or ethnic group, and often to a more severe extent, though scientists have yet to determine the exact reason why this is true.<sup>3,4,5</sup> The continued high prevalence within the African American community is of great concern to the medical community. Equally concerning is the potential consequence they may face if they allow the ordinary external pressures people face daily, to take precedence over their high blood pressure. To address this concern, the Association of Black Cardiologists and Daiichi Sankyo, Inc. are launching the **'My Pressure Points'** national consumer education campaign. The goal of the campaign is to draw attention to this important health issue, and encourage African Americans to focus on their high blood pressure in addition to their external pressures.

“Elevated blood pressure in the African American community has been prevalent for quite some time, and minimized such that this treatable condition continues to result in catastrophes such as stroke and endstage renal disease,” said ABC Board member Icilma Fergus, M.D., Chief of Cardiology at Harlem Hospital Center in Harlem, New York. “The survey findings reaffirm the critical need for African Americans to work with their doctors and focus attention on their heart health, making sure it remains a priority in their lives. That’s why we’re partnering with Daiichi Sankyo to launch this campaign and ignite the high blood pressure conversation within the African American community.”

As part of the **'My Pressure Points'** campaign, the Association of Black Cardiologists and Daiichi Sankyo, Inc. have unveiled new resources at [www.mypressurepoints.com](http://www.mypressurepoints.com) which may help African Americans take a more proactive approach to controlling their blood pressure. The web site has practical advice for controlling and delaying the onset of high blood pressure as well as culturally relevant tips for eating healthier and increasing physical activity. Results from the My Pressure Points national online survey conducted in 2009 of over 500 African Americans with high blood pressure (age 18 and older) and 150 doctors who treat African Americans with hypertension, are also available. Additionally, people can log on to take the survey and see how their responses compare to the national results.

"As a leader in global cardiovascular health, Daiichi Sankyo is committed to providing the most up-to-date, comprehensive educational resources for people who are at increased risk for high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, such as African Americans," said Jonathon Jaffe, M.D., FACC, Senior Medical Director, Hypertension - Therapeutic Area Head, Medical Research and Strategy at Daiichi Sankyo, Inc. "Helping patients manage chronic diseases more effectively - whether that entails adopting a healthier lifestyle recommended via their physician and/or taking appropriate medication when prescribed – will benefit both patients and physicians. We're pleased to be partnering with such a recognized leader in cardiovascular health, the Association of Black Cardiologists, on this important health awareness campaign."

### **My Pressure Points National Survey Highlights**

#### ***Juggling life's pressure points***

More than half (55 percent) of the African Americans with hypertension surveyed report that they are more 'stressed' about their financial situation now than they were a year ago, compared to just 28 percent who are feeling more anxiety about their health than 12 months ago.<sup>6</sup> More than half (52 percent) admit they aren't giving their health and well-being as much attention as they would like.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, though 73 percent are worried about what their condition can lead to, they aren't taking proactive steps;<sup>8</sup> perhaps this is due in part to their viewpoint on how big an issue they think it is – 29 percent don't consider their condition to be a big problem.<sup>9</sup>

#### ***Family history not enough to encourage action***

Of the 75 percent of African Americans with high blood pressure surveyed who were aware of a family history of blood pressure before they were diagnosed, almost three in five (59 percent) did not take any steps to keep their blood pressure down before their own diagnosis.<sup>10</sup>

"Unfortunately, for some, it takes a serious personal health scare to get them to take a closer look at their condition," said Dr. Fergus. "It is dangerous for high blood pressure and other cardiac risk factors to take a backseat to so many other life stresses."

Interestingly, more men than women surveyed (46 percent vs. 38 percent) who were aware of a family history made an effort to keep their blood pressure down before their own diagnosis.<sup>11</sup>

### ***African American women more stressed than men – yet LESS proactive***

The African American women with high blood pressure surveyed are slightly more likely than their male counterparts to stress about the many pressure points in their lives, including their family (52 percent vs. 43 percent), personal health (57 percent vs. 48 percent) and their finances (77 percent vs. 67 percent).<sup>12</sup> Despite these concerns, African American women are still less proactive than men (56 percent vs. 47 percent) and admit their health doesn't receive the attention it should.<sup>13</sup>

"Women tend to pay more attention to their family's health and not focus on their own," said Dr. Fergus. "But women need to become more proactive about taking care of themselves, and promoting health from within their families."

### **Survey Methodology**<sup>14</sup>

Kelton Research conducted the online survey within the U.S. between January 29 and March 6, 2009. The survey sample included 506 African Americans, aged 18 and over, who have been diagnosed with hypertension. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 4.4. percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. More comprehensive survey highlights can be found on [www.mypressurepoints.com](http://www.mypressurepoints.com).

### **About the Association of Black Cardiologists**

The Association of Black Cardiologists, located in Atlanta, GA, was founded in 1974 to bring special attention to the adverse impact of cardiovascular disease on African Americans. A nonprofit organization, the ABC has an international membership of more than 600 health care professionals and 1500 health advocates and created Spirit of the Heart, a well-organized effort to eliminate health disparities across the country. The ABC is dedicated to eliminating the disparities related to cardiovascular disease in all people of color. For more information, call 800-753-9222 or visit [www.abcadio.org](http://www.abcadio.org).

### **About Daiichi Sankyo, Inc.**

Daiichi Sankyo, Inc., headquartered in Parsippany, New Jersey, is the U.S. subsidiary of Tokyo-based Daiichi Sankyo Co., Ltd., which is a global pharmaceutical innovator. The headquarters company was established in 2005 from the merger of two leading Japanese pharmaceutical companies. This integration created a more robust organization that allows for continuous development of novel drugs that enrich the quality of life for patients around the world. A central focus of Daiichi Sankyo's research and development is cardiovascular disease, including therapies for dyslipidemia, hypertension, diabetes and acute coronary syndrome. Also important to the company is the discovery of new medicines in the areas

of infectious diseases, cancer, bone and joint diseases, and immune disorders. For more information, visit [www.dsi.com](http://www.dsi.com).

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<sup>1</sup> Kelton Research. My Pressure Points Survey. 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> American Heart Association. High Blood Pressure. Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2114>. Accessed May 14, 2009

<sup>4</sup> American Heart Association: High Blood Pressure Statistics. Available at: <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4621>. Accessed May 6,, 2009

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: What Every African American Should Know. [http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/african\\_american.pdf](http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/mission/partner/african_american.pdf). Accessed May 6, 2009

<sup>6</sup> Kelton Research. My Pressure Points Survey. 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Ibid