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In Wake of Tragedy, American College of Cardiology, Foodsmart, Higi, the Buffalo Healthy Corner Store Initiative Launch Buffalove Caring Hearts Initiative

New initiative reaches Buffalo, New York, communities through cardiovascular health and food security support

WASHINGTON (July 6, 2022) — The American College of Cardiology has joined forces with Foodsmart, Higi and the Healthy Corner Store to launch the Buffalove Caring Hearts Initiative. The program will provide sustainable, ongoing support and infrastructure for cardiovascular health and food access/security in the communities directly affected by the tragic events that occurred at Tops Friendly Markets on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo, New York.

“Community tragedies like the mass shooting in Buffalo have a direct impact on heart health. The ACC is mission-driven to improve heart health, both globally and locally,” said Eric Stecker, MD, FACC, chair of the ACC Science and Quality Committee. “With the Buffalove Caring Hearts Initiative, our goal is to provide ongoing support that empowers, connect, and provides convenience to the community for years to come by supplying resources for food security, nutrition, meal planning, in-store health screening services and patient risk assessments—all of which have a direct impact on heart health.”

Tragedies that affect entire communities have been shown to increase the occurrence of heart attacks and strokes within the community. The Buffalove Caring Hearts Initiative will support the Buffalo community in avoiding adverse outcomes while addressing factors that existed before the event took place. Buffalo was selected for this initiative due to its history of health equity issues and its successful Healthy Corner Store Initiative. These efforts were accelerated after the recent tragedy on Buffalo’s East Side.

“The Healthy Corner Store Initiative (HCSI) continues to offer a multi-level community approach providing access to fresh produce and healthier options, and we are excited to partner in this initiative which will expand our efforts., said Sheila A. Bass, Healthy Corner Store Initiative Coordinator. “The Buffalove Care Initiative will support yet another level of mindful community health with access to health screenings right at your local participating HCSI store. The HCSI community will have the necessary resources and tools right at their fingertips to engage in actions steps and to increase awareness of their heart health and much more.”

Through the program, Higi's Smart Health Stations deployed at the Healthy Corner Stores will allow members of the community to monitor their health numbers like blood pressure and weight, understand risk factors for conditions like heart attack and stroke and gain access to information on heart health from CardioSmart, ACC's patient engagement program. The platform's survey capabilities, physiological screening tools and other patient engagement mechanisms will allow Higi to provide education and personalized recommendations to resources available in the community.

"We are deeply saddened by the events that took place at Tops Friendly Market on May 14, 2022, in Buffalo," said Jeff Bennett, CEO at Higi. "While we cannot begin to imagine the pain being felt by this community, we are honored to be able provide access to screen for prevalent and pervasive health conditions and to deliver education and actionable programs that can help community members address their risk factors and better manage their ongoing care."

Foodsmart—an all-in-one app-based grocery platform to make eating well simple—helped catalyze the coalition with the leadership of Foodsmart CEO and Buffalo native, Dr. Jason Langheier, leveraging his passion and his platform to serve the community.

Foodsmart will put healthy food within reach by making the road to good health easier through registered dietitian coaching, recipe and cost-effective grocery shopping support and tailored meal planning tools. Communities in ZIP codes 14208 and 14209 will receive free grocery delivery, automated meal planning and grocery lists, and convenient, budget-friendly recipes

"Food is medicine and critical to our lives, yet the act of feeding ourselves and our families can be stressful, complicated and expensive, but it shouldn't be," said Dr. Jason Langheier, CEO of Foodsmart and Buffalo native. "At Foodsmart, we believe that eating well should be within reach for all, not some. That food should be accessible and affordable. And that we have a role to play in addressing the nutrition insecurity that plagues too many, and that has a direct impact on our health and susceptibility to illness. We are committed to serving Buffalo and the Buffalove coalition."

As part of its mission to transform cardiovascular care and improve heart health, the ACC is working with the Healthy Corner Store Initiative to address health care disparities through community-based partnerships. In addition to Buffalo, the initiative will expand to additional communities across the United States.

The American College of Cardiology envisions a world where innovation and knowledge optimize cardiovascular care and outcomes. As the professional home for the entire cardiovascular care team, the mission of the College and its more than 56,000 members is to transform cardiovascular care and to improve heart health. The ACC bestows credentials upon cardiovascular professionals who meet stringent qualifications and leads in the formation of health policy, standards and guidelines. The College also provides professional medical education, disseminates cardiovascular research through its world-renowned JACC Journals, operates national registries to measure and improve care, and offers cardiovascular accreditation to hospitals and institutions. For more, visit [acc.org](https://www.acc.org).

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