

Media Alert

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Contact

Maryann Verrillo, (703) 460-5572

Diane Shnitzler, (703) 460-5582

comm@SIRweb.org

Ultimate Health Quiz to Determine Risk for Peripheral Arterial Disease
Interventional Radiologists Recommend That Seniors, African-Americans, Diabetics Take Online Quiz, Get Screened if Needed

WHO: Ten million Americans have peripheral arterial disease or PAD, and research shows that the highest risk populations include seniors (12–20 percent of those 65 and older), African-Americans (twice as likely to develop clogged leg arteries) and diabetics (one in three who are over the age of 50). PAD—clogged or narrowed arteries in the legs—is a red flag that the same process may be going on elsewhere in the body. Symptoms—such as leg pain while walking, numbness and tingling in the lower legs and feet, coldness in the lower legs and feet, or ulcers or sores on the legs or feet that don't heal—could be PAD warning signs, notes the Society of Interventional Radiology. Through early detection—including the use of a simple online quiz—individuals may be able to prevent future stroke, heart attack and early death.

WHAT: Legs for Life[®]—a community health and public information program of SIR Foundation—recommends that individuals take its free, online self-assessment quiz during September's national PAD awareness month. The online quiz helps assess health, family and lifestyle risks for PAD. The higher one's score, the more important it is for that individual to discuss the quiz's results with his or her doctor. Legs for Life[®] offers a national screening program dedicated to improving the cardiovascular health of the community with the early detection of PAD. The ankle brachial index (ABI)—a simple and painless test—is used; the ABI compares the blood pressure in the legs to the blood pressure in the arms to determine how well the blood is flowing and if additional tests are needed. More than 322,000 people have been screened to date through the Legs for Life[®] program, with one in four of these individuals being shown to be at risk for PAD. Select sites will also screen for abdominal aortic aneurysm, stroke risk and venous disease.

Legs for Life[®] began a decade ago because interventional radiologists—vascular experts who treat PAD—recognized that the disease is a major public health problem with a growing incidence, yet awareness among the general public and nonvascular health care providers is low.

WHEN: **The Legs for Life[®] free, year-round online quiz can be taken now at www.legsforlife.org to assess health, family and lifestyle risks for PAD.** In September, during national PAD awareness month, interventional radiologists may provide PAD screening at selective sites through Legs for Life[®]. **Note:** *Legs for Life[®] sites provide a limited number of screenings; advance appointments are required. Many interventional radiologists offer year-round screening by appointment; a link to this information is provided on the Legs for Life[®] site.*

WHERE: Nearly 100 U.S. sites were available in 2008 to screen those at risk and to raise public awareness of PAD. To take the free PAD risk assessment quiz—or to request a screening appointment at selective sites—visit www.legsforlife.org.

WHY: With more than 50 percent of PAD patients asymptomatic or with atypical symptoms, screening is essential for diagnosis. Get tested if you

- Have cramping in your leg when walking or exercising that is relieved by stopping and resting the leg
- Are over age 50
- Have high cholesterol, a high lipid blood test or high blood pressure

- Have a family history of vascular disease, such as PAD, aneurysm, heart attack or stroke
- Have diabetes
- Smoke now or have ever smoked
- Are African-American
- Have an inactive lifestyle

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About Legs for Life

Since September 1998, Legs for Life® has been held annually by the Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) and the Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation. It is the largest, longest running and most inclusive national vascular disease screening program in the United States. Nearly 322,000 people have been screened to date, with one in four found to be at risk for PAD. Select sites will also screen for abdominal aortic aneurysm, stroke risk and venous disease.

The Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) is a founding partner of the PAD Coalition which, along with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), runs the national PAD awareness campaign in September called “Stay in Circulation: Take Steps to Learn About PAD.” Visit www.legsforlife.org.

About the Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation

SIR Foundation is a scientific foundation dedicated to fostering research and education in interventional radiology for the purposes of advancing scientific knowledge, increasing the number of skilled investigators in interventional radiology and developing innovative therapies that lead to improved patient care and quality of life.

Interventional radiologists are vascular experts who invented angioplasty and the catheter-delivered stent, which were first used in the legs to treat peripheral arterial disease. They provide vascular disease management and specialize in minimally invasive treatments. Visit www.SIRfoundation.org.

Local interviews, medical illustrations and broadcast-quality video footage are available by contacting SIR’s communications department by phone at (703) 460-5572 or via e-mail at mverrillo@SIRweb.org.