

Working together to improve the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for all those affected by arrhythmias

**ARRHYTHMIA ALLIANCE WELCOMES NHS CALL TO PROVIDE TESTS TO
IDENTIFY PEOPLE WITH UNDIAGNOSED HEART RHYTHM DISORDERS**

**LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES DO NOT MANDATE OR COMMISSION MANUAL PULSE
RHYTHM CHECKS RECOMMENDED AS PART OF NHS HEALTH CHECK SERVICE**

**“MOST PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR PULSE AND HOW TO
CHECK FOR AN IRREGULAR HEART RHYTHM – A SIMPLE MANUAL PULSE CHECK CAN HELP”**

15 August 2017, Oxon: NHS England announced this week that millions of people are to be offered checks at GP surgeries and pharmacies in a bid to prevent heart disease and early deaths. One focus is on the detection of irregular heart rhythms (arrhythmias). More than two million people in the UK have an arrhythmia (heart rhythm disorder), half a million people have undiagnosed atrial fibrillation (AF) leaving them at high-risk of a debilitating or life-threatening AF-related stroke, and up to 100,000 people each year die from sudden cardiac death. Identifying an irregular heart rhythm early, followed by appropriate management, will prevent many unnecessary deaths and devastation caused by AF-related strokes. It will also save the NHS millions.

Arrhythmia Alliance welcomes this call to action from NHS England and has recently undertaken a freedom of information request to determine if manual pulse rhythm checks – as recommended in the NHS Health Check – are being offered to patients. The request uncovered that nearly 75% of Local Health Authorities in England recommend GPs offer a manual pulse rhythm check to people going through the NHS Health Check service. However, very few mandate or commission this as part of the Health Check and do not capture any data to see if GPs in their areas are undertaking these simple pulse rhythm checks.

“The focus of our work this year is to identify the undiagnosed person with an arrhythmia, and we fully support the plans announced by NHS England. However, we do need to raise awareness and educate the public about arrhythmias, (heart rhythm disorders) and the importance of being pulse rhythm aware – if we are to reduce the many thousands of unnecessary deaths,” said Trudie Lobban MBE, Founder and CEO, Arrhythmia Alliance.

President: Prof A. John Camm, QHP, MD, FRCP, FACC. **Trustees:** Mr Mark Bullock, Professor Richard Schilling, MB, BS, FRCP, MD, Mr Nigel Farrell, LLB (Hons), Dr Adam P Fitzpatrick, MD, FRCP, FACC, Mrs Trudie Lobban MBE FRCP Edin
Patrons: W B Beaumont, OBE, Rt. Hon Tony Blair, Prof Silvia G Priori, Prof Hein JJ Wellens, HM King Constantine of Greece

Working together to improve the diagnosis, treatment and quality of life for all those affected by arrhythmias

She added, “We need primary care, whether in general practice or community pharmacy to identify those people most likely to have an arrhythmia, through opportunistic screening, using both manual pulse rhythm checks and mobile ECG device technology that is now being made available through the NHS. These tools make it much easier to identify possible arrhythmias, and, as importantly, rule out what could be a benign irregular heart rhythm.”

During this year’s World Heart Rhythm Week (5-11 June 2017), Arrhythmia Alliance made more than one million people pulse rhythm aware and co-ordinate the taking of 10,000 pulse checks, across the UK and worldwide.

Why it is important to know your pulse –

- More than two million people have an arrhythmia in the UK
- More than 500,000 people in the UK have undiagnosed AF, and are at increased risk of a debilitating or life-threatening AF-related stroke – the most severe type of stroke
- Arrhythmias cause up to 100,000 sudden cardiac deaths each year in the UK; over 250 every day, more deaths than breast cancer, lung cancer and AIDS combined
- 120,000 people experience unexplained loss of consciousness each year, commonly a sign of a heart rhythm disorder
- There is no commissioned national programme of pulse checks or heart rhythm screening

-ends-

Notes to editors

For an interview with Trudie Lobban MBE, or for more details on the Freedom of Information request please contact: nigel@hearhythmalliance.org

ARRHYTHMIA ALLIANCE

Arrhythmia Alliance, are global advocates, working in partnership to reduce deaths and impact on individuals caused by cardiac arrhythmias and their associated morbidities. By raising awareness and campaigning for the improved detection and care of heart rhythm disorders, Arrhythmia Alliance aims to extend and improve the lives of the millions around the world that these conditions affect.

Visit website www.hearhythmalliance.org

President: Prof A. John Camm, QHP, MD, FRCP, FACC. **Trustees:** Mr Mark Bullock, Professor Richard Schilling, MB, BS, FRCP, MD, Mr Nigel Farrell, LLB (Hons), Dr Adam P Fitzpatrick, MD, FRCP, FACC, Mrs Trudie Lobban MBE FRCP Edin
Patrons: W B Beaumont, OBE, Rt. Hon Tony Blair, Prof Silvia G Priori, Prof Hein JJ Wellens, HM King Constantine of Greece