



WE CARE

PRESS RELEASE

## **We CARE: a joint initiative by PCR and Stent – Save a Life!**

**A global call for action is fostering timely care for patients with heart disease, despite COVID-19**

*Paris, France, 3 May 2021. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, patients have been consistently deprived of timely cardiovascular treatment. This is due in part to measures taken in response to the sanitary crisis, but it is also due to patients' own unwillingness to seek medical help, even in emergency circumstances such as myocardial infarction or decompensated heart failure. **PCR and Stent – Save a Life! have joined forces to launch We CARE and raise awareness, similar to previous efforts led by cancer research organisations. It seeks to restore patients' faith in pursuing timely medical treatment by empowering all stakeholders – healthcare practitioners, national authorities, and the media.***

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### **Interventional cardiologists worldwide are sounding the alarm**

Even during the pandemic, cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death worldwide, claiming 17.9 million lives each year<sup>1</sup>. However, the fear of COVID-19 keeps about 40% of heart attack patients away from their doctors<sup>2</sup>. PCR Chairman, William Wijns, and Stent – Save a Life! Chairman, Christoph Naber, together with a group of renowned interventional cardiologists and researchers from around the world, want the joint advocacy programme We CARE to “rebuild patients' confidence and help stakeholders provide effective and timely cardiac care through knowledge, education, and training.”

### **Reminding patients that time is of the essence when it comes to heart disease**

At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, many authorities postponed non-essential medical procedures until the outbreak could be better understood and contained. Too many patients are still staying away and declining procedures, even in life-threatening situations. What are **We CARE's** words of advice for these patients? When in the slightest doubt, call a doctor or go to the hospital - immediately. Not seeking medical attention in a cardiac emergency will almost certainly damage the heart, while the risk of contracting COVID-19 in a controlled healthcare environment is very much lower.

### **A community that is thinking globally and acting locally**

**We CARE** is inviting the thousands of interventional cardiologists and other medical colleagues from around the world to take an individual and active part in reversing the trend. To support them in this endeavour, in addition to media kits including posters and flyers, the new initiative will also make available tools and guidelines to help healthcare professionals prevent procedure postponement, encourage them to accelerate the implementation of telemedicine, and ensure the preparedness of healthcare systems.

### **The support of public authorities and the media is essential**

Decision-makers must remember that delaying medical attention for critical heart problems is no different from delaying cancer treatment.

All stakeholders are being urged to investigate what can be done to maintain access and encourage patients to seek timely care. The consequences of late presentation are dramatic on two counts. Many that survive frequently have a drastically reduced quality of life, and the potential burden on the healthcare system is unforeseeable. The message of **We CARE** is loud and clear: public authorities are being advised to include the treatment of heart disease on the list of essential health services that must be maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and any comparable challenging situation in the future.



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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation. 2017

<sup>2</sup> Mafham MM, Spata E, Goldacre R, et al. COVID-19 pandemic and admission rates for and management of acute coronary syndromes in England. Lancet. 2020;396(10248):381-389. doi:10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31356-8

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More details concerning We CARE will be found on this page: [www.wecareabouthearts.org](http://www.wecareabouthearts.org)

Activities can be followed on social media using the hashtag: #WeCareAboutHearts

<https://twitter.com/WeCareAboutHearts>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/wecareabouthearts>

### **Notes to editors**

#### **About We CARE**

The We CARE initiative was inspired by the challenging global pandemic of COVID-19. It aims to empower all stakeholders – healthcare practitioners, national authorities, and the media – to help patients rapidly regain trust that receiving timely cardiovascular treatment is both necessary and safe.

For further information, please contact Sandrine Wallace: [sandrine.wallace.wecare@gmail.com](mailto:sandrine.wallace.wecare@gmail.com).

#### **About PCR**

**The mission of PCR** is to serve the needs of each individual patient by helping the cardiovascular community to share knowledge, experience and practice. PCR offers a wide range of educational meetings and resources for the interventional cardiovascular community's continuing education. These include major annual Courses, e-Learning with high-profile **PCR Webinars**, tailor-made **PCR Seminars** on specific topics, online resources and medical publications such as **EuroIntervention**, the official journal of the **EAPCI**.

Gateways to all PCR activities are available on [www.pcronline.com](http://www.pcronline.com).

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#### **About Stent – Save a Life!**

The Stent – Save a Life! global initiative aims to improve access to guideline complying therapy and the lifesaving indication of primary percutaneous coronary intervention (p-PCI), thereby reducing mortality and morbidity in patients suffering from acute myocardial infarction (AMI).

More details of Stent – Save a Life! activities will be found here: [www.stentsavealife.com](http://www.stentsavealife.com)

For further information, please contact Sandrine Wallace: [contact@stentsavealife.com](mailto:contact@stentsavealife.com).



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