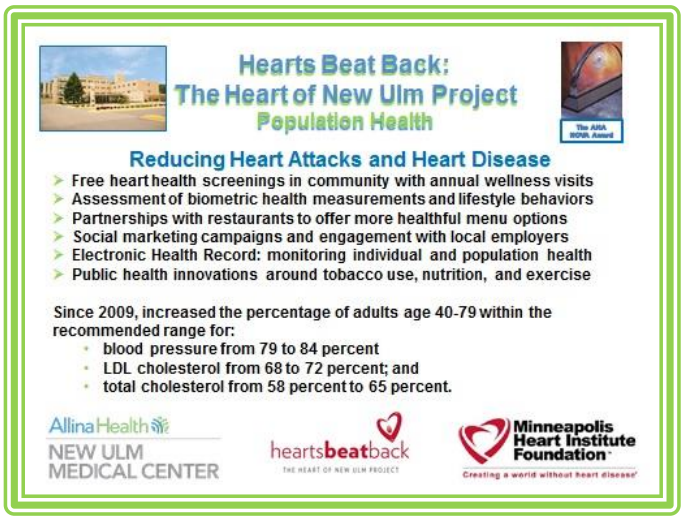
ALLINA NEW ULM MEDICAL CENTER, NEW ULM, MINN.



HEARTS BEAT BACK: THE HEART OF NEW ULM (HONU) PROJECT

HONU is a community-driven initiative to reduce heart attacks in New Ulm, Minn. It received an AHA NOVA Award in 2014.

The project began in 2007 when **New Ulm Medical Center** (NUMC) partnered with the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation, and engaged town leaders to discuss how to improve the community's heart health. Today, the 36-member HONU committee includes representatives from the New Ulm chamber of commerce, city government, local college, school district, county public health, churches, local employers, parks and recreation, local media and the general community, as well as the medical center.

More than 5,000 residents participated in HONU's first free heart health screening in 2009 and more than 3,100 in the second screening in 2011. Screenings have been held at workplaces, churches and community centers, and have assessed blood markers, weight, blood pressure and behaviors including nutrition, tobacco use, stress and physical activity.

Other community initiatives include a commitment from several local restaurants to offer more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, healthier fats, fewer total calories; social marketing campaigns and engagement of local employers; and point-of-purchase displays that suggest healthier snack and beverage alternatives in local stores.

The overall effort receives support from the NUMC electronic health record, which captures data from across the entire community. That is, 40 multispecialty doctors all integrated, a home health team, a hospice team, emergency medical services and a pharmacy, all use the same EHR, which allows active identification of high-risk patients.

Since 2009, the HONU project has increased the percentage of adults age 40-79 within the recommended range for:

- blood pressure from 79 to 84 percent
- LDL cholesterol from 68 to 72 percent; and
- total cholesterol from 58 percent to 65 percent.