

# women'sheartadvantage®

## HealthEast Care System

### Case Study

**“Essentially, we saw *Women's HeartAdvantage* as a way to lead the market rather than follow.”**

*Brenda Beukelman, System Director of Marketing*

### The Challenge

The Twin Cities area in Minnesota is often cited as one of the most competitive health care markets in the United States. Competition among cardiac service providers is intense. HealthEast Care System and its cardiologists came together in 2003 to discuss ways it could build upon its strong cardiovascular service line to improve care for women with heart disease and, in turn, build share by positioning the organization as experts in women's cardiac care. None of the other health systems in the market had tackled women's heart health as a defining issue, providing a prime opportunity for HealthEast to lead the market.

### The Solution

The health system saw ***Women's HeartAdvantage*** as a ready-made solution to organize, develop and accelerate its market positioning as the leading cardiac program for women with heart disease. Following the program's strategic action plan, HealthEast put together a system-wide steering committee of physicians, clinicians and marketing specialists, who also functioned as internal consultants for hospitals and staff members. The team drove a focused initiative system-wide to address gender disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease. Next, the organization launched a promotional campaign using television, radio, newspaper and direct mail to reach women at risk for heart disease and solicit their response through the call center and Internet for information, screenings and referrals to participating physicians. Efforts to engage and educate staff included an employee health fair and wellness challenge. “One of the biggest benefits of participation in ***Women's HeartAdvantage*** has been the stronger working relationship that developed between the marketing team and clinical staff as we worked together to raise the bar on clinical quality as well as improve competitive performance,” says system marketing director Brenda Beukelman.

### The Results

Within 16 months following the program's launch, HealthEast experienced significant consumer interest and requests for information packages about ***Women's HeartAdvantage***. Additionally, compared to the same period prior to the launch of the program, volumes increased for both inpatient and outpatient services:

- Outpatient Cardiology – **7.7% increase** in female cases
- Outpatient Cath Lab – **6.2% increase** in female cases
- Outpatient Cardiac Testing – **6.1% increase** in female cases
- ER Heart Related Cases – **13.7% increase** in female cases  
Inpatient Heart Care – **4% increase** in female cases

“The numbers demonstrate the effectiveness of ***Women's HeartAdvantage*** in increasing our cardiac volumes,” says Beukelman, “but that's just part of the story. We hear from women through testimonials about how this program motivated them to seek treatment and save their lives.”

