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**Chief Executive Officer
Association of Black Cardiologists
Atlanta, GA**

We believe that good health is the cornerstone of progress. We are firm in our resolve to make exemplary health care accessible and affordable to all in need, dedicated to lowering the high rate of cardiovascular disease in minority populations and committed to advocacy and diversity. We are guided by high ethics in all transactions and strive for excellence in our training and skills.

The Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc. (ABC), the preeminent association dedicated to eliminating disparities in cardiovascular care and outcomes for African Americans and other high-risk populations, seeks an accomplished leader to serve as its next Chief Executive Officer. Reporting to the President of the ABC, the Chief Executive Officer will play an essential role in continuing to move this 600+-member organization of medical professionals and others committed to improving cardiovascular health toward its ambitious goals - creating leadership to drive a national agenda, achieving a reduction in cardiovascular disease through awareness and personal empowerment, and establishing sufficient endowment to fund its programs.

This is an exciting and challenging opportunity for a talented leader to advance the ABC's vision of cardiovascular disease no longer being a leading cause of death. The new CEO will join the ABC at a time of tremendous opportunity. In just over thirty years, the ABC's staff and leadership have had considerable impact on both awareness and outcomes through effective partnerships with industry and other non-profits, and the development and delivery of a wide array of high-quality education, training, research, and community-based programs and services, along with tireless advocacy. Substantial progress has been made, but with African Americans still dying from heart disease and stroke at a 50 percent higher rate than other Americans, and heart disease and stroke killing more African Americans than cancer, accidents, pneumonia, AIDS, diabetes, liver failure, and homicide combined, there is still much work to be done. The ABC, with its strong reputation, record of achievement, and significant contributions, is uniquely positioned to continue to lead these efforts.

The new CEO will serve the Association as a leader, visionary, agent of change, ambassador, manager, and board developer in a way that optimizes organizational performance, fosters a sense of common purpose among all members, builds respect recognition and goodwill for the organization, ensures financial stability, and generates membership growth. Success will require a thoughtful, results-oriented leader who brings keen business and strategic sense, excellent communication skills, and a passionate commitment to ABC's mission. The ideal candidate will also bring proven ability to recognize and realize the potential of new opportunities, and to build strong relationships with a wide range of constituents - Board, volunteers, members, staff, funders, and complementary national and international organizations, and other existing and potential partners.

THE ASSOCIATION

In 1974, at the first cardiovascular disease disparities conference in the United States, 17 progressive medical professionals came together to organize the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) during the 47th Annual Scientific Sessions of the American Heart Association in Dallas, TX. These committed cardiologists and scientists dedicated the organization to reducing the cardiovascular disease burden in the African American community. From the outset, the intent was to partner with government, industry, foundations, churches and professional organizations, and to make membership available to all who are concerned about the reduced life expectancy and heart health of African Americans. Today, the ABC, a 501c(3) with a \$5-6M annual operating budget, continues to benefit from these public and private partnerships leveraging its impact in communities across the nation and internationally.

ABC's diverse membership of over 600 represents a full range of disciplines, including clinicians, researchers, educators, fellows, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, students and other healthcare professionals involved in cardiovascular disease and medicine. Its membership also includes pharmaceutical/device industry representatives, and individuals from social, religious, civic, and other organizations interested in the ABC's goals and mission.

Throughout its history, the ABC has enjoyed collaborative relationships with the American College of Cardiology (ACC), American Heart Association (AHA), National Medical Association (NMA), and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). These are mutually beneficial relationships and the ABC has capitalized on the natural synergies with these groups by organizing its annual meeting and three major education programs, Scientific Sessions and the ABC Annual meeting (March), the Dr. Walter M. Booker, Sr. Memorial Symposium (August), and a Congress on the Treatment of Cardiovascular Diseases (November), to coincide with the scientific sessions of the ACC, NMA, and AHA. The Association also produces two publications on a quarterly basis, *The Journal of the Association of Black Cardiologists*, and the *ABC Newsletter*.

Ten years ago, knowing that African-American children are considered fortunate if they have one surviving grandparent by their 21st birthday, the ABC adopted the mantra "Children Should Know Their Grandparents So They Will Become GREAT Grandparents Themselves." This slogan has galvanized the community and solidified its commitment to reducing its susceptibility to cardiovascular disease. The ABC continually reinforces the underlying message: if you want to meet those wonderful people in your future, you must take better care of yourself today, through its many programs, services, member benefits, and community outreach.

ABC Goals and Programs

The ABC's primary goal is to achieve zero disparity in vulnerability to cardiovascular disease, access to quality healthcare and outcomes in treatment. To this end, the organization has developed core competencies in four key areas over its 33 year history: 1) continuing medical education, 2) clinical trials and research, 3) women's health, and 4) community outreach. The Association's diverse activities reflect its multi-faceted approach to fulfilling its mission, and the organization now proudly houses three Centers of

Excellence: Epidemiology, Continuing Education and Professional Development, and Women's Health. The ABC is also active in influencing public policy, research, and education related to cardiovascular disease and medicine.

Recognizing that an important step to eliminating disparities is increasing underrepresented minority presence in the cardiovascular workforce, the ABC established the Cardiologists-In-Training (CIT) Program in 1986 to address the needs and concerns of fellows and residents in training. Through numerous initiatives and opportunities, including the award of over \$300,000 in scholarships and fellowships each year, this program has assisted hundreds of students, residents, and fellows in their career development.

The CIT program has been highly successful in supporting clinicians through their training, but actual workforce expansion, with appropriate representation of African Americans in cardiology training programs, has not kept pace. Of the 23,000 cardiologists in the United States today, only about 500, or two percent, are African American, and only 70 are African American women. Yet African Americans make up 13 percent of the population and the incidence of cardiovascular disease and poor outcomes in the African American and other underserved communities is significantly higher than among whites.

The ABC has also raised awareness of the fact that African Americans and other underserved populations have historically been omitted from drug and medical device company studies. In addition to advocating for change in the complement of participants in clinical trials, the ABC facilitates participation of under-represented populations in clinical studies. The ABC's Clinical Trials Program has three distinct components: Clinical Investigator Recruitment, Patient Enrollment in Clinical Studies, and Study Start-Up and Site Management. In addition to increasing representation, this clearinghouse has been valuable to pharmaceutical and medical device companies who now understand the importance of including minorities and women in studies, and who are now required to include at least 25 percent people of color among trial participants.

The ABC is playing an increasingly important role in continuing medical education for healthcare professionals, offering outstanding Professional Cardiovascular Education programs that are highly recognized for both their content and quality. In 1995, an important milestone was achieved when the ABC became accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to award Continuing Medical Education (CME) for programs developed under its auspices. In 2005, the Association's Center on Continuing Education and Professional Development was awarded Accreditation with Commendation, the highest rating achievable by a provider of CME. Sparked by the knowledge that African American women have a 69 percent higher death rate from cardiovascular disease than white women, in 1997 the ABC formed a Committee on Cardiovascular Disease in Women to focus on this especially high risk population. This Committee's work led, in 1999, to creation of the ABC Center for Women's Health, which strives to be a major force in improving the cardiovascular health of women of color through professional and community education, research and health policy advocacy. The Center sponsors an Annual Symposium on Cardiovascular Diseases in Women, and smaller regional programs in cities throughout the US.

In addition to education for healthcare providers, the ABC is a provider of a number of community education and outreach activities for non-physicians, including community-

based programs designed to promote awareness and to equip the Community with the tools to fight heart disease. These have taken a number of forms over the years, and typically include [interventions to aid in empowering the lay community to actively engage their healthcare providers in addressing healthcare challenges, especially as they relate to cardiovascular health](#). One program, CHOICES (Changing Health Outcomes by Improving Cardiovascular Education and Screenings), is representative of these ABC grassroots efforts. This innovative faith-based program provides church members hands-on training in blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index measurements. Lay Health Promotion Specialists educate and screen African Americans for cardiovascular disease risk factors to reduce their risks and raise awareness and prevention of cardiovascular disease in the communities they serve.

CURRENT SITUATION

In its early years, the AHA provided staff support for the ABC and for twelve years, Dr. Richard Allen Williams, the ABC's founder, served as the organization's first president. Then, in 1986, B. Wayne Kong, PhD, JD was hired to serve as the ABC's first Executive Director. Building on the ABC's early accomplishments, Dr. Kong's work, complemented by a succession of innovative presidents, has for twenty one years been instrumental to the success of the organization and the reduction of heart disease, diabetes, and stroke in the African American community. July 2008, Dr. Kong will retire from his position as CEO of the Association to pursue new opportunities. His unwavering commitment to ABC's mission, along with his creativity, resourcefulness, and capacity to build enduring relationships with members, volunteer leadership, colleagues, and funders have been invaluable to the organization.

While this will indeed be a time of transition for the ABC, it is also recognized as an opportunity to take stock of where the organization is today and where it wants and needs to be tomorrow. The timing for this reflection also comes at a critical moment in the life of the ABC, because two significant changes in the internal and external environments in which the Association operates have occurred over the past few years that are impacting how the ABC carries out its work.

The pharmaceutical and medical device industries have long been the primary sources of funding for many of the ABC's programs, and changes in federal regulations concerning the types of activities these companies can fund has imposed restrictions on these funding streams, especially for CME-related support. Developing a new funding strategy to fill these revenue gaps is critical.

Coincident with these changes, in January 2006, the ABC moved from downtown Atlanta to its new offices in The ABC International Library, Research and Conference Center. This stunning 40k sq. ft. multi-purpose facility is located in the South Fulton area of Atlanta on 127 acres of rolling countryside overlooking beautiful Lake Frances. The ABC seized this opportunity to capture new revenue by leveraging real estate to generate discretionary income, build an endowment, and to upgrade its space for business operations. They capitalized on their relationships and credit worthiness to garner \$12M from members, friends, and partners to make this investment possible.

The best strategy for leveraging the assets of the land and building complex is being carefully considered at this time. It is expected that by early 2008, ABC's Board of Directors will decide on a course of action to capitalize on these assets and to strengthen ABC's financial position. A General Manager has recently been hired to develop and execute a marketing strategy to promote the Center's meeting and events facilities and to maximize their revenue generating potential.

KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The new Chief Executive Officer will join the ABC during a time of transition and tremendous opportunity, and the following will be early priorities:

Articulate a clear vision and strategy for the ABC

The ABC leadership recognizes the need for a more strategic approach to advancing its mission, and in 2006, several Board and other dedicated ABC members worked with staff on the development of a strategic plan. The plan was well thought out but not widely communicated, and pressing issues emerged requiring more immediate attention.

The Board will look to the new CEO to work closely with them and with the senior management team to develop and execute a plan that includes both strategic and operational goals and is linked to ABC's budgeting process. The plan will need to include both short- and longer-term goals, and leadership will expect the new CEO to ensure that the plan is a living document, that elements are being implemented in the timeframes established, and that it can and will be modified as forces shift and goals no longer fit the overall strategic direction of the organization. The CEO will be expected to work with the Board and senior management on a careful review of current programming and priority setting. Leadership anticipates that the new CEO and the senior team will structure their plans and performance assessments around the strategic plan with budgeted goals.

Generate a diverse and reliable revenue stream

Throughout its history the ABC has been heavily reliant on the pharmaceutical and medical device industries to fund its programs and activities, and these will continue to be an important source of revenues. At the same time, as federal regulations impose greater restrictions on the types of activities these companies can support, it will be incumbent on the new CEO to expand ABC's funding base working closely with the Board and the Vice President for Development to identify and cultivate relationships with potential new funding sources. These will include corporations in other industries, such as insurance and fitness, as well as philanthropic support from individuals or organizations with an interest in the ABC's mission. Developing a longer-range plan of programs for which it will seek funds as part of its strategic planning process is likely to make the ABC an increasingly attractive organization to support given its compelling mission and the fact that addressing disparities in healthcare access, management, and outcomes is a growing priority on a national level.

In addition to pursuing philanthropic support, the ABC's Board and staff look forward to the new CEO taking a critical look at existing programs, member benefits, services, and products, to evaluate how each fits into the organization's goals and objectives, and identifying those that do or do not add value. They also expect that the new CEO will

identify and develop new revenue generating opportunities looking both within the organization and externally for programs, products and/or services that align with the ABC's mission and are likely to yield appreciable financial returns for the Association.

Ensure that the organizational structure, infrastructure, and work environment are in place to effectively support the goals and activities of the organization

The Board and staff at all levels of the Association recognize the need for a strong senior management team and staff stability to effectively support the growing demands of the ABC. With primary responsibility for both the internal and external activities and operations of the organization, the new CEO will need to assess early on whether the current organizational structure, including staff size, complement and reporting relationships, provides the foundation for the Association to function at its greatest potential. As staffing needs are identified, key to ensuring the ability to recruit and retain the well-qualified staff required will be the development of a comprehensive Human Resources program that includes well-defined hiring practices, position descriptions, performance standards, and performance appraisal and compensation systems.

The new CEO will also need to review the Association's technology infrastructure, with particular attention paid to assessing how effectively existing information systems and other technology resources are meeting the needs of the ABC. With technology playing an increasingly important role in virtually all aspects of the organization's work, from routine communication, to the delivery of programs and services to members, to the wide range of data needs internally and from external partners, including funders, it is essential that ABC's systems have the capacity to meet the growing demands.

Initiate strategies to grow the membership

The new CEO will be expected to grow the Association's membership by developing and expanding current and new programs, activities, and services in a manner that is sustainable and beneficial for all ABC members and other stakeholders. The CEO will need to work with the Board and staff to determine how the ABC can tailor its range of activities to service the differing professional needs of members in private practice, academic settings, technologists, scientists, and international constituents. It is also likely that the new CEO will want to explore with the Board new categories of membership to expand the Association's scope and impact.

ABC's membership of just over 600 includes approximately 500 physicians, 300 of whom are cardiologists, with the remainder comprising a combination of healthcare professionals, industry representatives, and others committed to the organization's compelling mission. Ensuring that the ABC is the "association of choice" for clinicians and others with an interest in cardiovascular disease and issues of disparity will be an important task for the new CEO, especially as other organizations are raising the profile on this issue and placing it high on their agendas.

There are many cardiologists, including a number who are African American, and other physicians and healthcare professionals who are not members of the ABC but are obvious target audiences to whom the new CEO will be expected to reach out. A strong membership base also requires a focus on young physicians and healthcare providers

entering the workforce. As the ABC strives to increase its visibility in key national forums, such as the National Data Safety Monitoring Committee or the End Point Adjudication Committee, and to enhance its research agenda, it will be increasingly important to expand the Association's reach into academic medicine, where many of the thought leaders in the field reside.

Build Board Capacity

The ABC's highly committed Board of Directors and Executive Committee are physicians engaged in private practice or academic medicine, and a number of these leaders have been active in the organization for many years. Soon, greater depth in skill will be added, including business, financial and legal, with new recruits being introduced to complement the physicians' perspective.

Recently, Board members have been more actively engaged in the operations of the ABC, especially as they relate to their fiduciary responsibilities. As the ABC takes an increasingly strategic approach to achieving goals and fulfilling its mission, the Board will look to the new CEO for leadership and guidance in helping them make the transition to a more strategically oriented governing body. The new CEO, in close collaboration with the Executive Committee will need to consider several variables in this process, including Board size, composition, committee structure, and succession planning for the Executive Committee. A critical piece will be for the CEO to work closely with the Board to help clarify appropriate levels of involvement of Board and staff - ensuring that both are empowered in their respective roles. The CEO will also enhance Board effectiveness with the development of well planned and communicated agendas for Board and Executive Committee meetings, and clearly articulated action items.

As new members join the Board, it will be important to ensure a well-developed orientation program is in place to facilitate their entrée and to support them as they become better acquainted with the organization, its programs, and its ambitions, and come to understand their roles and how they can best contribute. An important element will be inclusion of a formal mentoring structure to help each new member become fully engaged and know that there is a "network" to call upon for guidance.

Ensure ABC's Image and Brand

The ABC is recognized as *the* pioneering organization in addressing issues of disparity in cardiovascular care and outcomes for African Americans and other high-risk populations, but many more organizations are now "competing" for recognition and resources in this arena. The new CEO will be expected to play a leading role to broaden the understanding of ABC's brand to a worldwide audience through government, social, and economic relationships with representatives of all aspects of the industry. In this capacity the CEO will need to strengthen the ABC's position as a global authority on cardiovascular diseases in African Americans, to advocate for domestic and international acceptance, and to oversee the development of standards, guidelines, research, training programs, and marketing information services and products.

Supervising and coordinating efforts of the Association to monitor and address legislative and regulatory issues relating to ABC's mission and goals on a timely basis, and advocating

for issues affecting members and their patients will also help to secure the ABC's position as a leader in this dialogue.

Nurture Existing Relationships and Cultivate New Ones to Enhance ABC's Visibility and Reach

The ABC closely collaborates with a number of medical societies, professional associations, and governmental agencies, including the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, the National Medical Association, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, and the Centers for Disease Control - professional relationships that have been vital to the Association's success. The new CEO will be expected to play a role in nurturing and strengthening partnerships and collaborative activities with these and other organizations, such as the International Society on Hypertension in Blacks (ISHIB), whose missions and goals are related to those of the ABC. The CEO will help cultivate and enhance communication and cooperation among physicians, scientists, technologists, professionals, and individuals in the community dedicated to cardiovascular health and issues of disparity.

THE ROLE

The CEO reports to both the President and the Board of Directors of the ABC. Direct reports to the CEO have included the Vice President for Professional Education and Research, the Vice President for Business Operations, the Vice President for Development, and the Conference Center General Manager, with a total complement of 16 dedicated employees who are highly committed to the Association and its mission.

The CEO sits on the Executive Committee of the ABC's 25-member Board of Directors. The CEO serves as the primary ABC staff liaison to the Bylaws and Constitution and Nominations committees, and as an ex-officio member of other committees. The Board of Directors meets formally three times a year, to coincide with the Association's three scientific sessions, and by conference call as the need arises.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

While no one person will possess all of them, the successful candidate will embody many of the following professional and personal qualifications and characteristics:

- At least 10 years of progressively responsible experience, including at least 5 years of management experience in healthcare, association management, or a related field, preferably in a non-profit setting.
- Advanced diplomacy skills to work effectively with a wide range of constituents; proven ability to forge and sustain alliances among diverse organizations and individuals; the disposition to be a collaborative partner;
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills; proven ability to successfully promote activities, products, programs, and services; strong marketing skills to build interest in the Association and its mission; a track record of success enhancing image, credibility and recognition;

- A deep commitment to the Association's mission; a strong understanding of the challenging healthcare industry and association environment within which such organizations manage and market themselves;
- Demonstrated success leading a complex enterprise, leanly staffed and capitalized; experience setting and implementing organizational strategy and managing through growth and change; evidence of effective financial management and enthusiasm for leading-edge technology;
- A record of attracting and retaining an excellent staff, and delegating effectively to them; a naturally consultative and participative leadership style, coupled with the willingness to act decisively when consensus is elusive; a high tolerance for ambiguity and continual give and take;
- Experience leading organizations through planning that is both creative and rigorous; a venturesome spirit disciplined by high standards and a sense of the achievable; a talent for close attention to the important details, and the wisdom not to get mired in them; superior ability to balance short- and long-term pressures and opportunities;
- The capacity to serve as a formidable advocate and ambassador for the Association and its mission; demonstrated ability to represent the Association's mission compellingly with prospective donors and to design new strategies for philanthropic fundraising and other potential sources of financial support;
- Evidence of successful interactions with a volunteer Board of Trustees;
- High energy and tenacity; personal qualities that insure transparency in governance and the highest standards of integrity.
- An advanced degree in a relevant field (MBA, MPA, JD, MD, PhD, PharmD) strongly preferred.

COMPENSATION

Compensation for this position will be competitive and commensurate with the successful candidate's experience.

TO APPLY

To learn more about the Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc. visit www.abcadio.org.

Isaacson Miller, a national executive search firm specializing in leadership searches for mission driven organizations (www.imsearch.com) has been retained to assist in the search. Nominations and applications for this position, including a resume and cover letter, should be sent in confidence to:

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(Electronic submissions are strongly encouraged)