

Eisenhower Screens Former National Football League Player

Eisenhower Medical Center, the National Football League (NFL) Players Association and the Living Heart Foundation joined forces to raise awareness about heart disease, and in the process screened a group of retired players to determine whether they were at risk for heart disease. The screenings took place in conjunction with the annual meeting of the NFL Players Association, which was held in Rancho Mirage last May.

The screenings were conducted as part of a national program spearheaded by the Living Heart Foundation, which was founded by cardiac surgeon and former NFL player Arthur "Archie" Roberts. "We know that body mass is a major factor in heart disease, and we know that football players are often very large people," says Dr. Roberts. This screening and others held around the country will contribute to research conducted by the Living Heart Foundation, exploring the relationship between professional football players and cardiovascular disease.

Participants in the Eisenhower player screening included former Pittsburgh Steelers line backer Michael Merriweather, former St. Louis Cardinals running back Willis Crenshaw, former Oakland Raiders offensive guard Frank Middleton, and Leonard Wheeler, former safety for the Cincinnati Bengals, Minnesota Vikings and Carolina Panthers

The Eisenhower medical team conducted calcium CT (computed tomography) scoring to identify the risk of heart disease as well as echocardiograms, cholesterol and blood pressure testing, and assessments for sleep apnea among other tests. As part of the program, each of the participating athletes had an individual meeting with a health professional from Eisenhower Medical Center to review and discuss preliminary results, with final test results mailed four to six weeks later.