

**Bill Frist:** I am the health policy advisor for *AF Stat*<sup>™</sup>: *A Call to Action for Atrial Fibrillation*. It was 16 months ago that leaders gathered. Twenty-four diverse organizations came together to increase this awareness of atrial fibrillation as part of *AF Stat*.

People say what is *AF Stat*? It's an initiative sponsored by sanofi-aventis that basically is to shine that spotlight on atrial fibrillation. Sixteen months ago a number of us came together. We all sat down at the table to create a road map for raising awareness. It seemed like it would be easy. It's complicated. It's tough. It has to be systematic.

And now we're well down that road. The success of the initiative has hinged on active participation and there are too many friends in the room to begin recognizing people who are in the room. But Eric Prystowsky I do want to say, because he was the first person to call me who is a world leader in this field of electrophysiology. Eric, thanks for your leadership. And Eric serves as *AF Stat* medical chair. The National Forum on Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention serves as the public health advisor, obviously well represented here today. And also my good friend AFib patient and NBA Hall of Famer Jerry West, who is with us. We were just together a few minutes ago, who serves as *AF Stat*'s patient advocate.

The first thing we did as a group was to create a call to action. It was a document that provided in your packets today, the document that was produced. The expertise of the leaders and the working group members helped us create this document that outlines those barriers, the major barriers, to the optimal diagnosis of atrial fibrillation. Also, we outlined the obvious—the most obvious obstacles to management of atrial fibrillation. This roadmap identifies priority actions needed to improve care and outcomes for patients with AFib.

The issues in there that are addressed, or the buckets in there that are addressed, are policy and advocacy, are management, are education and quality. As we were drafting the call to action we realized that we really do not have all of the pieces of the puzzle. As many of you will recall we're sitting around our tables and we were throwing out ideas and putting suggestions on table and then we said that there's something missing.

We really need a much better picture. We need to define that burden of atrial fibrillation to understand the best way to address it. To give it more definition. Nobody had done it and that's the real value of what's getting into the issue itself. We saw that there were missing pieces of information, academic institutions hadn't done it, the private industry hadn't done it, doctors hadn't done it, and that's what we did.