

Messages for the 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions

What is the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge?

- The 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge was a competitive challenge to identify and recognize practices, clinicians, and health systems that have demonstrated exceptional achievements in working in getting at least 70% of their patients with hypertension under control.
- The Challenge was open to public or private health care clinicians, medical practices, and health systems.
- The Challenge aimed to identify and recognize high-performing practices and systems that achieved hypertension control among patients, improve understanding of successful implementation strategies, and motivate team members, including patients, to intensify their hypertension control efforts.
- The Challenge included two parallel but separate tracks: private-sector practices or health systems and federal clinics or health systems.
- This is the second year of the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge. The 2013 Challenge was announced in July 2013, and nominations were accepted through September 30, 2013.

Why is the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge important?

- Hypertension is a major contributor to heart disease in the United States, the leading cause of death.
- Nearly 1 in 3 American adults (67 million) has high blood pressure. More than half of those people—36 million—don't have the condition under control.
- High blood pressure has an annual estimated cost of \$51 billion; 93% of those costs are direct medical expenses. Imagine the cost savings of reducing blood pressure.
- The good news is that high blood pressure *can* be controlled.

- There are critical benefits to controlling hypertension. Reducing the population's average systolic blood pressure by just 12–13 mmHg could reduce—
 - Stroke rates by 37%.
 - Coronary heart disease rates by 21%.
 - Deaths from cardiovascular disease by 25%.
- These statistics reinforce just how much of a health impact we can have by working together to reduce high blood pressure. Hypertension control is the single most important thing we can do to save lives in this country.
- Given the benefits, controlling high blood pressure is a key component of the Million Hearts® initiative's work to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017.
- For that reason, Million Hearts® encourages health care practices to prioritize hypertension control within their patient populations.
- Ultimately, we know that hypertension control is achievable, and we want to help more practices and patients get there.
- The Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge helps us do that by providing practices with examples of steps to take to improve their own hypertension control rates.

Who are the 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions?

Private-sector practices or health systems:

- Broadway Internal Medicine PC; Queens, N.Y.
- Cheshire Medical Center/Dartmouth-Hitchcock Keene; Keene, N.H.
- Jen Brull, M.D.; Plainville, Kan.
- Nilesh V. Patel, M.D., FRCS(Eng); Audubon, Pa.
- Kaiser Permanente Northern California
- River Falls Medical Clinic; River Falls, Wis.
- ThedaCare; Appleton, Wis.

Clinics or health systems within a federal department or agency:

- Pawhuska Indian Health Center (U.S. Indian Health Service); Pawhuska, Okla.
- Veterans Health Administration (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

More information about this year's winners and the strategies used to successfully support their patients in managing their blood pressure can be found at

http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/newsevents/hypertension_control_champions.html.

How were the 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions selected?

- Champions had to demonstrate hypertension control rates at or above 70% among their population with high blood pressure.
- The recommended hypertension control measure was 0018 endorsed by the National Quality Forum. The measure captures the percentage of patients 18–85 years of age who had a diagnosis of hypertension and whose blood pressure during the measurement year was less than 140 mmHg systolic and less than 90 mmHg diastolic. Nominees could use a similar measure as long as it could be validated by the National Committee for Quality Assurance.

- Nominees had to describe strategies used to achieve their rates, including clinic systems or processes that support hypertension control, such as provider or patient incentives, electronic health records, team-based care, and more.

How are the 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions working with their patients to get blood pressure under control?

There are many tested strategies for controlling hypertension, with evidence to support their efficacy. Million Hearts® has developed a series of resource documents that summarize evidence based strategies that can be found at http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/resources/action_guides.html.

The 2013 Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge Champions used a variety of strategies to achieve 70% or high hypertension control rates. Some of the key strategies used were:

- **Identify hypertension champions** within a practice or organization. Provide feedback to individual clinicians and clinic sites on hypertension control rates, provide incentives for high performance, and recognize high performers.
- **Take action to improve medication adherence**, including patient rewards for medication adherence, prescribe once-daily regimens, fixed-dose combination pills, or 90-day medication refills, and frequent follow-ups.
- **Implement consistent, strategic use of electronic health records** that include clinical decision support tools, patient reminders, and registry functionality
- **Use team-based care models** to engage a broad scope of care providers, including but not limited to pharmacists and nurses. Expand the team-

based care model to include staff trained in blood pressure measurement techniques who can assist in obtaining patients' blood pressure readings.

- **Promote patient self-measured blood pressure monitoring with clinical support**, in which patients monitor their blood pressure at home, communicate the readings to their clinician, and receive medication adjustments or lifestyle modifications.
- **Stay connected to patients by conducting outreach and providing supports**, through patient portals, implementing steps to improve appointment adherence, and following up about blood pressure checks.