

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: HHS Press Office

(202) 690-6343

New public-private sector initiative aims to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes in five years

Million Hearts focuses on improving aspirin use, blood pressure, cholesterol control and tobacco prevention

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), with several key initial partners, today launched Million Hearts, an initiative that aims to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes over the next five years. Currently, cardiovascular disease costs \$444 billion every year in medical costs and lost productivity in Americans. Building on work already underway thanks to the Affordable Care Act, Million Hearts will help improve Americans' health and increase productivity.

Million Hearts is focused on two goals:

- **Empowering Americans to make healthy choices** such as preventing tobacco use and reducing sodium and trans fat consumption. This can reduce the number of people who need medical treatment such as blood pressure or cholesterol medications to prevent heart attacks and strokes.
- **Improving care** for people who do need treatment by encouraging a targeted focus on the "ABCS" – Aspirin for people at risk, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol management and Smoking cessation – which address the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and can help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

"Heart disease causes 1 of every 3 American deaths and constitutes 17 percent of overall national health spending," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "By enlisting partners from across the health sector, Million Hearts will create a national focus on combating heart disease."

By empowering Americans to make healthy choices and improving care, Million Hearts strives to achieve the following specific goals:

Indicator	Baseline	2017 goal
Aspirin use for people at high risk	47%	65%
Blood pressure control	46%	65%
Effective treatment of high cholesterol (LDL-C)	33%	65%
Smoking prevalence	19%	17%
Sodium intake (average)	3.5g/day	20% reduction
Artificial trans fat consumption (average)	1% of calories/day	50% reduction

“Through this public-private partnership, Million Hearts focuses on the areas that will save the most lives. It leverages and aligns current investments and is a great example of getting more health value from our existing health investments,” said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. “If we succeed in achieving our Million Hearts goals, 10 million more Americans with high blood pressure will have it under control, 20 million more Americans with high cholesterol will have it under control, and 4 million fewer Americans will smoke by 2017.”

“The treatment of heart disease and stroke account for about \$1 of every \$6 spent on health care in this country,” said Donald Berwick, M.D., M.P.P., administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). “By shifting our focus from paying for how much care is provided to how to get the best health for Americans and putting more tools into the hands of health care providers and patients, CMS can help prevent strokes, heart attacks and avoidable human suffering.”

Several partners from the private sector will work to achieve the Million Hearts goals by:

- **Improving Americans’ diets, reducing tobacco use, and improving medication adherence through community innovations.**

Specifically, these private sector initiatives include:

- **The American Heart Association** will help monitor progress of the initiative’s goals and provide consumers with access to their heart health management tools, including Heart 360, My Life Check, and the Heart Attack Risk Calculator.
- **Walgreens** will engage its more than 26,000 health care providers to support the Million Hearts initiative’s prevention goal by providing blood pressure testing at no charge in consultation with a Walgreens pharmacist or Take Care Clinic Nurse Practitioner.
- **The Y** is aiming to expand coverage of the Y’s Diabetes Prevention Program as well as the successful National Diabetes Prevention Program and CDC’s Healthy Communities Program to better address risks for diabetes, heart attacks, and stroke.
- **America’s Health Insurance Plans** and its members will amplify their ongoing commitment to reduce cardiovascular disease, which includes community-based collaborations to reduce the burden of obesity and other risk factors for heart disease (UnitedHealthcare), beneficiary fitness programs (WellPoint), initiatives to reduce ethnic and racial disparities in cardiovascular health (Aetna) and programs to better manage chronic disease (Cigna).
- **The American Pharmacists’ Association and the American Pharmacists’ Association Foundation** will encourage its more than 62,000 members to engage in the Million Hearts Campaign by raising awareness with their patients and their communities.
- **The National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations and the Alliance for Patient Medication Safety** will encourage state pharmacy associations and their members to engage in the Million Hearts Campaign throughout the year with many activities planned for American Pharmacists Month in October and beyond.
- **The National Community Pharmacists Association** will encourage all 23,000 independent community pharmacies to become involved in the Initiative and continue to raise awareness through their publications and social media outlets.

Participation and commitment from private partners are expected to grow in the coming months; major national associations like the American Medical Association and American Nurses Association have already committed their constituencies to this important work.

In addition, HHS will target more than \$200 million in new and refocused investments to achieve the goals of Million Hearts:

- Today, CDC is announcing \$40 million for chronic disease prevention programs to health departments across the country.
- The Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service are launching efforts to identify opportunities to reduce sodium in food in order to put more control into consumers' hands.
- CDC is announcing a \$2 million Pharmacy Outreach Project to team up with pharmacists to provide additional advice and support to patients diagnosed with high blood pressure.
- CMS is announcing \$85 million in Medicaid Incentives for Prevention of Chronic Diseases grants awarded to 10 states. These awards support prevention programs for Medicaid beneficiaries of all ages.
- CDC is announcing \$4.2 million in funds to seven national networks of community-based organizations to support, disseminate and amplify the reach of the Community Transformation Grant program. Later this month, CDC will announce another \$100 million in grants to communities across the country focused on reducing smoking, improving nutrition, and promoting blood pressure control.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will align all available resources to support improved outreach and provision of comprehensive health care to people with mental and substance use disorders.

HHS will also achieve the goals of Million Hearts by:

- **Enhancing focus on cardiovascular disease prevention**
 - Federal agencies and private sector partners will focus and align measurement strategies which will both improve ABCS care and simplifying reporting for providers. For example, the **Physician Quality Reporting System**, which provides bonus payments, and in the future, payment reductions, based on the reporting of quality information by eligible professionals, CMS plans to enhance its focus on the ABCS.
 - Beginning in 2012, HRSA will require all community health centers to report annually on the ABCS measures to track and improve performance, including new measures for 2012 for aspirin use and cholesterol screening. These efforts will help to improve ABCS care for more than 20 million patients.
- **Focusing HIT efforts to prevent heart attacks and strokes**
 - Ongoing HIT improvements will increase focus on cardiovascular prevention and give providers improved tools for their delivery of lifesaving ABCS care. Regional extension centers, which reach nearly 100,000 primary care doctors, and Beacon Communities will reach more than 100 million patients within the next few years.
- **Improving the delivery of ABCS care through clinical innovations**, including:
 - **Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs)**. A network of 53 Medicare-funded organizations nationwide to improve healthcare quality at the community level, QIOs will work with physician offices, clinics and other providers to create Learning & Action Networks focused on achieving the elements of ABCS as part of each QIO's tasks and goals.
 - **Learning from Local Innovators (Healthcare Innovations Exchange)**. The HHS Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's Healthcare Innovations Exchange supports efforts to identify and disseminate innovative efforts to improve health care led by local communities and leaders.

For further information on the public and private support of the Million Hearts initiative, please visit: <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov/about-mh.shtml>

For more information about the Million Hearts initiative and to access cardiovascular disease risk assessment tools visit <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>. Million Hearts is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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