



# CONTROLLING HYPERTENSION AND HIGH CHOLESTEROL: AN OVERVIEW

High blood pressure, or hypertension, affects nearly 68 million adults in the United States, and every year hypertension contributes to one out of every seven deaths. About half of adults with high blood pressure don't have their condition under control. Approximately \$74 billion in health care services, medications, and lost productivity costs are attributed annually to high blood pressure.

In addition, an estimated 71 million adults have high levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol), but only 34 million (48%) are treated and only 23 million (33%) have it controlled.

About 40% of African American adult men in the United States have hypertension. About 70%, or roughly 4.4 million, of these men do not have the condition under control. African American men suffer a higher death rate from hypertension than any other racial, ethnic, or gender group and have less frequent contact with physicians related to preventive care than do many other racial and ethnic groups, including African American women.

Taking antihypertensive medication is an important step that people with high blood pressure can take. Yet getting on the right medication, remembering to take it regularly, and adapting to new diet and exercise routines can be challenging. People often struggle to bring their blood pressure under control.

Doctors, too, are frustrated by the limited time they have to answer patients' questions, work with patients to lower their blood pressure, and track patients' progress. Practitioners may feel that treating disorders such as diabetes that may accompany high blood pressure are a more urgent or life-threatening concern.

Hypertension contributes to

**1 out of 7  
DEATHS**

**40%** of African American adult men in the United States have hypertension

**71 MILLION  
ADULTS**  
have high levels of LDL

## INTERVENTIONS: WHAT WORKS?

Many private and public employers, insurance companies, and health care providers across the country have taken innovative steps to prevent hypertension and high cholesterol among their employees or patients and to bring these conditions under control for the long term. In many cases, these innovations can be scaled up to reach more patients and improve more lives through coordinated, focused efforts of Million Hearts™ partners and stakeholders.

In the pages that follow, you will read about some of these efforts. Together, they highlight successful common strategies, including:

- Educational resources for patients.
- Tools for patients themselves to monitor and manage their health.
- Access to new health information technology.
- Teams working together to coordinate and improve care.
- Regular check-ins to record measurements and give feedback to patients.
- Access to a health-care provider for periodic consultations.