



# TENNESSEE

## EXCELLENCE IN BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL

Million Hearts®—Success in Blood Pressure Control

### 2014 MILLION HEARTS® HYPERTENSION CONTROL CHAMPIONS: TENNESSEE

Methodist Primary Care Group, Memphis



**Arsalan Shirwany**  
MD, FACC



**Daniel Otten**  
MD, FACC



**Holger Salazar**  
MD, FACC



**Jennifer Morrow**  
MD, FACC

Many health care providers, practices, and systems across Tennessee and the nation are focusing on blood pressure control. This challenging effort requires engagement from patients and family members or caregivers as well as teamwork from doctors, nurses, physician assistants, pharmacists, community health workers, and other professionals.

High blood pressure, also called hypertension, is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, the first and fifth leading causes of death in the United States. Every day, hypertension contributes to nearly 1,000 American deaths. In Tennessee, the rate of hypertension-related deaths is even higher than the national average, especially for African Americans.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge to encourage more clinical focus on controlling patients' blood pressure. Million Hearts® is a national initiative of the US Department of Health and Human Services to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017, and blood pressure control is crucial to achieving that ambitious goal. The Challenge recognizes doctors and health practices that achieved blood pressure control rates in at least 70% of their adult patients.

CDC and Million Hearts® are recognizing 30 providers, health care practices and systems—including 5 in Tennessee—as 2014 Hypertension Control Champions.

### SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL: TENNESSEE

The five Tennessee Champions used the following evidence-based strategies to help their patients achieve blood pressure control:

- **Take the time.** Spend time with patients to measure their blood pressure and explain hypertension risks, building trust and engagement. Educate patients about lifestyle factors like a healthy diet, exercise, and not smoking, and provide materials patients can take with them for reference.
- **Measure, measure, measure.** Use proper blood pressure measurement technique, and educate patients about how to check their own blood pressure properly at home. Encourage patients to keep a record of their blood pressure readings and bring this “homework” to follow-up visits.
- **Address medication adherence.** Work with patients to develop a treatment plan that fits their health goals and addresses barriers to taking medicines as directed, including medication cost and side effects. Emphasize the importance of following the plan and discussing any challenges with the health care team.
- **Use health information technology.** Track patient progress using standardized hypertension treatment protocols and electronic health records, with alerts for missed steps or gaps in follow-up and a dashboard, a tool to track and compare hypertension rates, to quickly visualize trends over time.

“We try to be more interactive with the patient. We give them ‘homework,’ that they bring with them to office visits.”

—Jennifer Morrow, MD, FACC,  
Stern Cardiovascular Foundation

