



# ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES

## EXCELLENCE IN BLOOD PRESSURE CONTROL

*Million Hearts®—Success in Blood Pressure Control*

### MILLION HEARTS® 2014 HYPERTENSION CONTROL CHAMPIONS: ADDRESSING HEALTH DISPARITIES

In 2014 Million Hearts® recognized 30 health care organizations and practices as 2014 Hypertension Control Champions for controlling the blood pressure of at least 70% of their hypertensive patients. Five of these Champions—Kelsey-Seybold Clinic in Houston, Texas; Green Spring Internal Medicine in Lutherville, Maryland; Denver Health Community Health Services; Kaiser Permanente Southern California; and Northlake Family Medical Practice in Columbia, South Carolina—also have many patients from racial and ethnic minority groups who have a higher risk for hypertension (high blood pressure) or who are less likely to receive treatment.

African Americans have a much higher risk of having high blood pressure. About 33% of all adults have hypertension, but about 45% of African Americans do. Hispanics do not have higher rates of hypertension, but Hispanic men who are hypertensive are less likely to take blood pressure medication.

### SUPPORT FROM THE TOP

“The best thing a health care organization can do to control hypertension is to have a physician champion and to have support from the top.”

—Jackie Evans, MBA  
Supervisor of Quality Improvement  
Kelsey-Seybold Clinic

Kelsey-Seybold has locations across Houston and a patient population that is about 19% African American, 15% Hispanic, and 6% Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander.

As part of providing the best care and reducing health disparities, the clinic has a Spanish-language

website and doctors and staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish. The clinic also has a language line available to meet the language needs of non-English speakers when a staff member is unavailable.

The clinic also has a physician who is a hypertension specialist and a strong advocate for the hypertension control effort across the clinics. Among other steps, the hypertension specialist has emphasized the importance of proper techniques for measuring blood pressure through education and training.

### A SYMPTOM OF STRESS

“We are very passionate about eliminating health disparities.”

—Holly R. Dahlman, MD  
Green Spring Internal Medicine

Hypertension is a medical problem, and stress may lead to temporary increases in blood pressure. Holly R. Dahlman, MD, takes the time to talk with her patients about why they are having difficulty controlling their hypertension and acknowledges the source of the patient’s stress and the role stress can play in the patient’s health.





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### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



“Partnering with community programs has helped our patients adopt healthier lifestyles.”

—Raymond Estacio, MD  
Associate Medical Director for Quality and Research  
Denver Health Community Health Services

At Denver Health, 78% of their patients are racial or ethnic minorities, including 33% whose primary language is not English. Denver Health uses community-based prevention programs to reach minority groups, including a community health worker (promotora)-led prevention program for Latino patients. Denver Health also runs the [Just Check It](#) blood pressure control program in collaboration with the Center for African American Health.

### EQUITABLE CARE



“Patient demographics matter in our treatment approach. We call it equitable care.”

—Joel Handler, MD  
Hypertension Lead Physician  
Kaiser Permanente Southern California

Kaiser found that their medication protocol was not strong enough for many of their African-American patients. When they doubled the dose for those patients, they were able to reduce the blood pressure to safe levels. Those steps, and others, have helped to achieve more equitable outcomes in controlling the blood pressure of their African-American patients.

### LIFESTYLE IS THE KEY

“When people know you care about them as individuals, they tend to be your partners in health care.”

—Reginald Parker, MD  
Northlake Family Medical Practice

At Northlake, 96% of patients are African American, a population that is at [greater risk for hypertension](#). Reginald Parker, MD, a solo practitioner, advises his patients to follow the [DASH](#) eating plan, which encourages lower sodium consumption and emphasizes fresh fruits and vegetables.

To help his patients really understand hypertension, Dr. Parker uses educational resources such as visuals of the heart and blood vessels, and he reinforces his advice with informational flyers.



These five providers have made control for every single patient their goal in the face of health disparities that put some populations at greater risk. These, and other practices, show it is possible to maintain high rates of hypertension control among their patients.

Learn more about all of the [2014 Hypertension Control Champions](#).