Elements Associated with Effective Adoption and Use of a Protocol

**Insights from Key Stakeholders**

Simple, evidence-based treatment protocols are an essential tool for improving blood pressure control among practices and health care systems. To accelerate the adoption and implementation of protocols, Million Hearts® convened a group of stakeholders who recognize that the use of protocols is key to their success in blood pressure control. Stakeholders consist of protocol owners, key organizations and health care providers who have successfully used protocols within their system. This document is a compilation of comments and insights gained from the stakeholder discussions in fall 2013 about adopting and using hypertension protocols.

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**Audit and Feedback**

▸ Identify a key influencer to serve as a champion.

▸ Identify mentors to provide consultation on implementation.

▸ After baseline data are collected, discuss and set a goal, such as “Increase by 10% the number of hypertensive patients aged 18 years or older whose blood pressure is under control.”

▸ Use an electronic or paper registry that identifies patients with high blood pressure and allows tracking over time.

▸ Use electronic health records to collate and analyze clinical information.

▸ Provide regular and timely feedback on performance to the entire health care team.

▸ Make performance data transparent and learn from those who are reaching the goal.

▸ Celebrate early wins.

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**Team-Based Care**

▸ Make hypertension control a priority.

▸ Fully use the expertise and scope of practice of every member of the health care team: physician, advanced practice nurse, physician’s assistant, nurse, hospital and community pharmacist, medical assistant, care coordinator, and others.

▸ Include the patient and family as key members of the team.

▸ Conduct pre-visit planning to make the most of the care encounter, such as ensuring that patients bring in their home readings and ask questions or express concerns, including about access to medications and monitoring equipment, adverse effects of medications, and challenges with diet and exercise.

▸ Learn about community resources and recommend them to patients.

▸ When hypertension is not controlled, look for opportunities to check in with patients between visits and adjust medication dose as needed.
**Professional and Patient Education**

- Provide the health care team with the evidence base for adopting and using protocols.
- Train the health care team on how to use the protocol.
- Offer ongoing training to staff on how to measure blood pressure accurately.
- Calibrate and inspect equipment at regular intervals to ensure correct blood pressure measurement during patient visits.
- Emphasize the value of home blood pressure monitoring.
- Incorporate coaching and self-management into patient education and follow-up visits.

**Suggested Citation**


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- University of North Carolina at Greensboro: Leslie Davis, PhD, RN, ANP-BC
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Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. It is led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, two agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services.

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