

September/October 2015

Tools You Can Use

- **Learn your heart age and how to improve it**—Is your heart older than you are? The average American heart is 7 years older than it should be. You can take action at any age to lower your heart age and keep it low over time. Learn your heart age now with this **heart age calculator**, then read the latest **Vital Signs** report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to learn what heart age is, why it matters, and how to improve it.
- **Start the conversation about medication adherence**—Medication adherence is a challenge for many patients who are at risk for or who live with cardiovascular disease. To address this issue, CardioSmart created an infographic to help patients understand the importance of medication adherence. This infographic and **other posters** that CardioSmart developed make great additions to waiting and exam rooms.
- **Understand self-measured blood pressure monitoring (SMBP)**—The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology partnered with CDC to create an interactive infographic to inform health care providers about SMBP, the burden of high blood pressure, and the medical and financial advantages of an SMBP program.
- **Check out this student toolkit to help introduce a tobacco-free campus policy**—*Create Change* is a toolkit, developed by the Tobacco-Free College Campus Initiative, that contains resources and tools to help students take action on their own college campuses and institute tobacco- or smoke-free policies. For more information on the toolkit, visit the Initiative's **website**.

Million Hearts® in the Community

- **Health centers succeeding in Million Hearts® performance measures.** The Health Resources and Services Administration has awarded 215 Million Hearts® badges to health centers that meet or exceed the Million Hearts® goal of 70% on each of the following performance measures: use of aspirin for heart attack and stroke treatment, blood pressure control, and tobacco cessation counseling. Congratulations to these health centers on their achievement!
- **Join the fight against the Ladykiller.** The Women's Heart Alliance (WHA), which raises awareness, encourages action, and drives new research to fight women's heart disease, is supporting Million Hearts® as a new partner. Check out WHA's Fight the Ladykiller campaign, which encourages women to talk with their health care provider about their risk of heart disease and **#getHeartChecked**. Using resources such as the **Pocket Pal Checklist**, WHA helps women take the first step in getting their heart checked. Learn more about the campaign by visiting the **WHA website**, following them on **Twitter**, and liking them on **Facebook**.
- **Engaging partners for Million Hearts® success.** The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, a Million Hearts® partner, has worked with 16 state public health agencies since 2012 to organize and host Million Hearts® Stakeholders Workshops and to provide follow-up technical assistance. Read more about their experiences and lessons learned, as well as their recommendations for state health agencies interested in participating, in this new briefing document.
- **Recruiting primary care practices for EvidenceNOW.** To improve heart health and outcomes related to cardiovascular disease, EvidenceNOW, a national initiative funded through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, aims to help primary care practices use the latest medical research. Seven primary care cooperatives across the country will be implementing the initiative and are currently seeking small- and medium-sized primary care practices in select regions to which they will provide quality improvement services. If you are interested in learning more or participating, visit the **EvidenceNOW website**.
- **Alabama on its way to be the first to adopt a statewide high blood pressure protocol.** Alabama is in the process of implementing a statewide high blood pressure treatment protocol that uses an algorithm to treat patients with high blood pressure. Clinicians at county health departments throughout the state have already been trained on the algorithm, and the state's department of public health is encouraging other members of its Alabama Million Hearts® Blood Pressure Taskforce, including the state's 126 federally qualified health center sites, to adopt the algorithm. The information will also be included in a training video that will count toward continuing medical education and continuing education unit credits.

Let us know what you're doing to advance **Million Hearts®** in your community! **Send us** a short description with some key points, and we may feature you in a future e-Update!

The Science of Million Hearts®

- **NIH study shows more intensive blood pressure management may save lives.** The initial results of a landmark clinical trial called the Systolic Blood Pressure Intervention Trial (SPRINT), sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, shows that adults age 50 and over with high blood pressure and at least one risk factor are much more likely to live longer and free of cardiovascular disease if their blood pressure top number (systolic) is closer to 120 than to 140. Visit the **SPRINT website** for more information on the clinical trial, and stay tuned for the published results later this year.
- **Recommended use of self-measured blood pressure monitoring interventions for improved blood pressure control.** Based on a systematic review of 52 studies, the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends self-measured blood pressure monitoring interventions, used alone and combined with additional support, to improve blood pressure outcomes among patients with high blood pressure.
- **Heart age is exceeding actual age among U.S. adults.** CDC's September *Vital Signs* report examines heart age, or the predicted age of a person's heart and blood vessels based on cardiovascular risks. The study results demonstrate that on average, heart age exceeds actual age by 7 years among U.S. adults, indicating a higher risk for heart attack and stroke. The report discusses the racial, sociodemographic, and state-level differences of heart age as well as the potential use of heart age to spark the discussion on how to reduce the risk for heart attack and stroke. For more information and resources, visit the **Vital Signs website**.

2015 HYPERTENSION CONTROL CHALLENGE



Enter the Hypertension Control Challenge on the Million Hearts® website: **www.millionhearts.hhs.gov**



Join and spread the **word** about the **2015 Hypertension Control Challenge!** Million Hearts® is calling for nominations of clinicians, practices, or health systems working to help patients get their blood pressure under control. If you have achieved a hypertension control rate of 70% or more for your patients with hypertension, please share your success story and **enter the Challenge** by **October 31, 2015**.

To date, we have **recognized 41 Hypertension Control Champions**, who have together served more than 12 million adults. Help us celebrate more outstanding practices in 2015. Spread the word by encouraging high-performing practices to enter and by sharing our 2015 Champion **social media messages and graphics**.

—**Janet Wright, MD, FACC**
Executive Director, Million Hearts®

Do This!

Apply for the Cardiovascular Disease Risk Reduction Model

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is currently enrolling practices to participate in the **Million Hearts®: Cardiovascular Disease Risk Reduction Model**, a randomized-controlled trial designed to identify and assess models of payment and care delivery that reduce risk for cardiovascular disease. The application deadline for practices to participate has been extended through October 8, 2015. **Apply today!**



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