

Statewide Blood Pressure Improvement Challenge

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The impact of heart disease in America is staggering. It continues to be responsible for 1 of every 4 deaths in the United States and costs more than \$300 billion each year in treatment and lost economic productivity. Those costs continue to rise. Eighty million US adults have hypertension, and more Americans are dying from complications of it than they were a decade ago. Despite our efforts, the prevalence of hypertension continues to climb, with more than 40% of adults anticipated to have high blood pressure by 2030. According to a 2013 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, there are an estimated 1.3 million adults with hypertension in Wisconsin alone, and a little over 53% remain uncontrolled. Of those nearly 700,000 residents of this state who have uncontrolled hypertension, about 40% are unaware of their status.

Many deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided with relatively simple measures. Just eliminating the key risk factors leading to chronic disease would prevent at least 80% of cases of heart disease, stroke, and type

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2 diabetes—not to mention 40% of all cancers.¹ Those leading attributable risks, according to a Wisconsin Department of Health Services report,² are well known to most physicians: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, and diabetes.

Unfortunately, based on data from the

and Smoking cessation. Million Hearts is not only a clinical push; it convenes a wide range of partners and programs with the goal of helping Americans live longer and healthier lives. The campaign recognizes that its ambitious goal requires a collective effort from a wide variety of stakeholders, including physicians, phar-

Through work with both primary care providers and home health agencies, MetaStar is endeavoring to implement evidence-based practices that support and promote proven intervention measures across the state.

2007-2008 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES),³ nearly 50% of US adults have at least 1 of the 3 preventable risk factors already mentioned: uncontrolled hypertension, uncontrolled high cholesterol, or smoking. To address this public health concern, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) established Million Hearts in 2011, a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The campaign has as its 4 pillars those clinical interventions that have been proven to reduce cardiovascular morbidity and mortality most effectively. These are known as the “ABCS” measures: Aspirin therapy when appropriate, Blood pressure control, Cholesterol control,

macists and pharmacies, community groups, employers, government agencies, and patients themselves.

This national Million Hearts campaign forms the foundation for several cardiac initiatives on which MetaStar and its stakeholder partners are currently collaborating. MetaStar, in its partnership with Stratis Health (Minnesota) and MPRO (Michigan) as the Lake Superior Quality Innovation Network, is funded by CMS to work to improve cardiac health and to reduce cardiac health care disparities. This task focuses on alleviating disparities for cardiac outcomes and care, prioritizing proper blood pressure measurement and control. Through work with both primary care providers and home health agencies, MetaStar is endeavoring to imple-

ment evidence-based practices that support Million Hearts and promote a greater focus on the ABCS measures across the state. An AHRQ-sponsored national research project, the Healthy Hearts in the Heartland (H3) consortium likewise focuses on strategies that are advocated by the Million Hearts initiative. This work employs 2 complementary approaches to quality improvement focused on the ABCS measures: point of care (POC) strategies and population management strategies. Finally, MetaStar has been invited by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to participate in the latter's recently awarded Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) Million Hearts Learning Collaborative grant. The focus of this initiative is to build and support sustainable links between health care organizations, public health, and the community that reinforce and enhance the larger goals of the Million Hearts campaign. This current work is ongoing in 3 designated Wisconsin communities: Milwaukee, West Allis, and Green County.

A key entity in this undertaking is the Wisconsin Heart Disease and Stroke Alliance (HDSA), which is convened by the DHS quar-

terly and brings together stakeholders from Wisconsin's government, nonprofit, and professional organizations to advance the larger goal of improving the cardiac health of Wisconsin's residents. On the basis of the collective momentum of the previously discussed cardiac-focused initiatives across the state, DHS and other HDSA partners including MetaStar, with the support of the national Million Hearts team, has launched a statewide Wisconsin Blood Pressure Improvement Challenge that runs through the end of this year. The primary goal of this Challenge is collecting cardiac health focused success stories that can be distilled and disseminated as new best practices for hypertension control in the state. With already nationally recognized cardiac health champions such as Christopher Tashjian of Vibrant Health Family Clinics in Ellsworth—a 2-time winner of the Million Hearts Hypertension Control Challenge—the HDSA is confident that there already exist other Wisconsin-based organizational efforts and individual successes that only need to be brought to light. Although a critical part of the fight against heart disease takes place in the clinical setting, the chal-

lenge recognizes that much of that fight happens well beyond and far upstream of that point as well. MetaStar and its partners in the HDSA strongly encourage health care organizations, clinicians, and their community partners to submit entries for consideration. For additional information on this challenge, please visit The Atrium, Wisconsin's clearinghouse for the Million Hearts Initiative, via the MetaStar website: <http://www.metastar.com/providers/clinics-and-physician-offices/the-atrium/>.

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