

5 barriers to hypertension control: What they are and how to address them

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Given that almost half of all U.S. adults have high blood pressure, nearly all primary care physicians, cardiologists, endocrinologists and nephrologists face the challenge of helping their patients with BP control. And while there is a serious risk of heart attack, stroke, and even death, BP control remains far from ideal with practices experiencing difficulties. Learn about the biggest hypertension-control barriers and what you can do to address them in your practice.

There are five common barriers to hypertension control.

- Poor or inconsistent blood-pressure measurement techniques.
- Masked hypertension, which causes patients to appear to have normal BP in the office when they have high blood pressure outside the office. The masked effect can happen in patients with or without a hypertension diagnosis.
- Clinical inertia, which occurs when the care team does not initiate or intensify treatment during an office visit if the patient's BP isn't at goal.
- Lack of use of evidence-based treatment protocols by the care team.
- Poor patient participation in self-management behaviors.

Resources to improve control

Fortunately, physicians have access to tools and resources from Target: BP™, a national initiative co-led by the American Heart Association (AHA) and the AMA. Through this collaboration, physicians and care teams get access to the latest research, tools and resources to help patients reach and sustain blood-pressure control rates.

By working together, medical practices and health service organizations can significantly improve the nation's BP-control rate.

In addition to direct access to trained field-support specialists, a website and a suite of evidence-

based tools and resources, Target: BP offers annual, recurring recognition for all participating sites that submit their BP-control data as well as those that achieve hypertension-control rates of 70 percent or higher in their adult patients.

The following resources also provide simple practical tips you can use to help your patients get their hypertension under control.

- | Get the one graphic you need for accurate blood pressure readings.
- | Read about the essential steps to help patients of color control BP.
- | Learn more about what to do when patients aren't measuring up.
- | Find out what other physicians are doing to control hypertension in their practices
- | See how one practice saw firsthand difference that self-measured BP can make.