

# Surgeon general: Hypertension control must be a national priority

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**What's the news:** U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams, MD, released a call to action to control hypertension, placing it as a national priority. The aim is to prevent the negative health effects of hypertension across the country by identifying interventions that can be implemented, adapted and expanded across diverse settings.

“The report reinforces the need for physicians and other health professionals and their patients, as well as communities, to prioritize hypertension control,” said AMA President Susan R. Bailey, MD. “In particular, we applaud the surgeon general for urging sectors to create tailored strategies aimed at improving reach and equity—given disparities in blood-pressure control remain persistent, with lower control rates in Black, Latinx, Asian and Native American adults compared to White adults.

“We also know that cardiovascular disease places vulnerable populations at greater risk for adverse outcomes associated with COVID-19,” Dr. Bailey added.

Learn more from this *JAMA* viewpoint article, “A National Commitment to Improve the Care of Patients With Hypertension in the US,” written by Dr. Adams and Janet S. Wright, MD, of the surgeon general’s office.

**Why it's important:** Despite the fact that hypertension has received ongoing national attention, nearly half of American adults have high BP and only about 26 million have it controlled.

After years of improvement in BP control, national rates have stagnated while inequities persist across the country. For more than 15 years, the U.S. saw a rise in BP control, from 31.8% to 53.8%, but it dropped to 43.7% from 2013–2014 to 2017–2018, according to a recent study published in *JAMA*

Discover the four reasons why BP control has dropped among American adults.

“Our top priority is to ensure physicians and all Americans, especially those in underrepresented and underresourced communities, have access to quality health care and the support they need to control high blood pressure and reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease,” said Dr. Bailey. “We are hopeful that today’s report will lead to more organizations and individuals recognizing that high blood pressure is a major health threat that must be addressed—spurring them to take immediate action to help protect more Americans from its deadly impact.”

“The AMA has been focused for nearly a decade on improving blood-pressure control for all Americans,” said Dr. Bailey. “We agree with the surgeon general that an important component of a national strategy is to support everyone with hypertension to take their blood pressure at home and review those readings with their care teams.”

**Learn more:** Knowing which blood-pressure measurement devices are validated for accuracy also is essential for patients and physicians. Visit the [US Blood Pressure Device Listing](#) to discover which blood-pressure measurement devices have been validated for clinical accuracy as determined through an independent review process.

The AMA has developed online tools and resources created using the latest evidence-based information to support physicians to help manage their patients’ high BP, including the seven-step, self-measured blood pressure quick guide.

These resources are available to all physicians and health systems as part of Target: BP™, a national initiative co-led by the AMA and American Heart Association (AHA). The Target: BP initiative aims to reduce the number of Americans who die from heart attacks and stroke each year by urging physician practices, health systems and patients to prioritize BP control.

Through Target: BP, health systems and organizations can also access the evidence-based AMA MAP BP™ quality improvement program, as well as the AMA and AHA’s co-developed e-learning course *Achieving Accuracy: BP Measurement*.

Additionally, the AMA and AHA teamed up with a group of national health care organizations and *Essence* magazine on the “Release the Pressure” campaign to advocate for improved heart health among Black women. Learn more about this national campaign.