One way to take the pulse of how well the U.S. has its BP under control is to review the annual enrollment totals from the Target: BP Recognition Program, an initiative developed by the AMA and the American Heart Association (AHA) to recognize health care organizations seeking to better control high BP in the patient populations they serve.

This year, 1,309 organizations (PDF)—or about 200 more than in 2021—are being recognized for their efforts to prioritize controlling their patients’ high BP.

While participation is high, the need to do more is even greater as nearly half of U.S. adults—121.5 million—are living with high BP, according to 2021 statistics from the AHA. High BP is a leading risk factor for heart disease, stroke and premature death. It also accounts for more than $52 billion in annual health care costs.

“Through our continued efforts to help ensure all people have access to quality health care and all physicians have the support they need to control high blood pressure, we will be able to greatly reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease and improve health outcomes for patients across the nation,” said AMA President Jack Resneck Jr., MD.

Reducing strokes and heart attacks

Target: BP™ aims to reduce the number of adult patients with uncontrolled BP by helping health care organizations and care teams improve BP-control rates—at no cost—through the evidence-based AMA MAP BP™ Program.

The organizations recognized by the Target: BP program serve more than 29 million patients, including 8.4 million with hypertension, and represent 49 states or U.S. territories.
More than 3,100 health care organizations have joined the nationwide movement to make heart health a priority since the AMA and AHA launched Target: BP™ in 2015.

“Together, the AMA and AHA share a commitment to reducing the number of Americans who have heart attacks and strokes each year,” Dr. Resneck said. “We are proud of the physicians and health care organizations who have already joined us in this effort, and we will continue to urge more physician practices, health systems and patients to prioritize the rising risk of high blood pressure.”

Gold or gold-plus award-level recognition was earned by 42% of participants and requires BP control rates of greater than or equal to 69.5%.

More than half achieved silver award recognition—which requires BP control data to be submitted and four out of six evidence-based BP activities to be completed.

The remainder received participation-level recognition that recognizes practices which submit data for the first-time and commit to reducing the number of adult patients with uncontrolled high BP.

Learn how to submit data to the Target: BP Recognition Program.

**Recognition celebrates excellence**

The gold-plus and silver award categories debuted last year in an effort to further celebrate excellence in achieving BP control. They also emphasize the importance of accurate BP measurement equipment, regular staff education and training, and reliable systems of care to ensure accurate BP measurement for every patient, every time.

Programs such as Target: BP help health care organizations and care teams work to improve BP-control rates through patient awareness and education on managing risk factors, such as lifestyle choices and family history.

The Target: BP website features a variety of resources related to self-measured BP, including implementation tips, such as how to loan out devices, select a cuff size, train patients, collect data and manage devices. Learn more about the AHA outpatient quality improvement programs.

The AMA supported the development of the US Blood Pressure Validated Device Listing (VDL™), which identifies BP measurement devices that have been validated for clinical accuracy in the U.S.