Disease focus: Hypertension

The American Medical Association offers numerous resources to help your practice improve the quality of care you offer your patients with hypertension. The AMA’s blood pressure improvement program can guide how you and your team assess and treat people with high blood pressure, increasing the likelihood of improving BP control in your practice. In fact, your practice’s implementation of a performance improvement initiative to focus on hypertension in your patient population can help you succeed in Medicare’s Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS).

This document outlines the different measures that relate to hypertension management in each MIPS performance category, potential MIPS score results, and related AMA resources that can help you improve the health of your patients with hypertension while checking all your MIPS boxes along the way.

MIPS performance category: Quality

**Scoring:** 50 percent of total MIPS composite score

The MIPS performance category for “Quality” focuses on your performance on certain quality measures—i.e., you choose to report on six quality measures relevant to your practice and patient population. The Quality category replaces PQRS. For more information about the Quality category and scoring, see the AMA’s MIPS Action Plan.

Below are the MIPS quality measures relevant to hypertension.

**Suggested hypertension outcome measure**

- Controlling high blood pressure (#236), *high priority measure*

- Percentage of patients 18–85 years of age who had a diagnosis of hypertension and whose BP was adequately controlled (<140/90mmHg) during measurement period

- Improvement in high blood pressure (#373), *high priority measure*

- Percentage of patients aged 18–85 years of age with a diagnosis of hypertension whose BP improved during the measurement period
  - Patients whose follow-up systolic BP is at least 10 mmHg less than their baseline BP or is adequately controlled
Suggested hypertension process measure

- Hypertension screening and recommended follow up plan (#317)
  - Percentage of patients aged 18 years and older seen during the submitting period who were screened for high BP and a recommended follow-up plan is documented based on the current BP reading as indicated

AMA resources: Target: BP

The AMA, has created tools and resources for providers to improve accuracy of hypertension diagnosis and BP control through the Target: BP™ blood pressure improvement program. Below are some of the resources that clinical care teams can use to improve quality of care, and that can lead to greater success in MIPS reporting.

TOOLS FOR #317/236/373: Focus on accurate measurement of BP

- Practice assessment tool for M.A.P. — Measure, Act, Partner
  Take a quick assessment to learn where you are doing well and where you can improve.

- BP measurement technique quick-check worksheet
  Help ensure that everyone in your practice takes BP readings the right way—and the same way—every time.

- Blood pressure measurement poster
  This piece highlights the proper steps to take when measuring blood pressure, with evidence-based tips for correct positioning.

- Measuring blood pressure accurately patient handout/poster
  Materials show the critical steps for measuring BP accurately, along with the potential impact those mismeasurements may hold.

- BP positioning challenge addressed by web-based tool
  Test your knowledge on how to resolve positioning issues and get an accurate reading.

- Using wrist cuff to measure blood pressure—a helpful handout
  For those instances when an upper arm cuff won’t fit, this piece explains how to use a wrist cuff correctly.

TOOLS FOR #236/373: Focus on management of hypertension and partnering with patients

- BP treatment algorithm
  Outlines recommended treatment for each BP threshold.

- Blood pressure average calculator
  Helps your patients keep track as they measure and monitor their BP.

- Collaborative communication strategies to manage blood pressure
  Highlights the ways to collaborate with your patients to control BP, including five communication skills that can help improve engagement and shared decision-making.

- Device accuracy test
  Use this resource to verify that a patient’s BP measurement device is properly calibrated to deliver accurate measurements.

- Patient training reference guide
  Ensures that designated staff has everything they need to train patients to self-measure blood pressure at home.

- Self-measured blood pressure training video
  Educational video helps care teams train patients to self-measure and serves as a resource that patients can use to reinforce how to properly self-measure blood pressure. This video is also available in Spanish.

MIPS performance category: Promoting Interoperability (formerly “Advancing Care Information”)

Scoring: 25 percent of the MIPS composite score

Promoting Interoperability (PI) is about using certified electronic health record technology (CEHRT) and the health care information that your practice captures in a meaningful way. PI is the new name for the Advancing Care Information (ACI) category. For more information about the PI category and scoring, see the AMA’s MIPS Action Plan.
Disease focus: Hypertension

Suggested hypertension relevant PI MEASURES
• Patient-specific education (PI_PEA_2 or PI_TRANS_PSE_1)
  • The MIPS-eligible clinician must use clinically relevant information from CEHRT to identify patient-specific educational resources and provide access to those materials to at least one unique patient seen by the MIPS-eligible clinician.
• Patient-generated health data (PI_CCTPE_3)
  • Patient-generated health data or data from a non-clinical setting is incorporated into the CEHRT for at least one unique patient seen by the MIPS-eligible clinician during the performance period.

Target: BP
The Target: BP Improvement Program has created tools and resources that can be used to educate patients about blood pressure measurement and control. Below are some of the available resources that clinical care teams can integrate into practice and use to successfully meet MIPS PI measure reporting.

RESOURCES FOR PATIENT-SPECIFIC EDUCATION (PI_PEA_2 or PI_TRANS_PSE_1) FOR ALL PATIENTS
Understand your BP numbers
Helps patients determine what category their blood pressure falls under.

How to measure blood pressure accurately
Helps patients ensure they are getting accurate blood pressure readings.

What is high blood pressure?
This piece explains the basics of high blood pressure, including key statistics, risk factors and information about treatment.

Consequences of high blood pressure
Infographic demonstrates how high blood pressure affects the body.

Seven salty myths
This piece delivers guidance that dispels seven common myths about sodium intake.

RESOURCES TO USE FOR PATIENT-SPECIFIC EDUCATION (PI_PEA_2 or PI_TRANS_PSE_1) FOR PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH HYPERTENSION
What is high blood pressure medication?
Brief overview of the medicines prescribed to help lower blood pressure and their possible side effects.

How can I monitor cholesterol, blood pressure and weight?
Helps patients with increased risk for heart disease or stroke work with you to monitor their risk and manage it.

Effects of excess sodium on your health
Infographic that demonstrates the effects excessive sodium intake can have on one's health and appearance.

High blood pressure and stroke
Explain the risks associated with high blood pressure, including stroke.

How do I manage my medication?
An informational piece that outlines strategies for medication adherence.

How can I monitor cholesterol, blood pressure and weight?
An informational piece that outlines strategies for cholesterol, blood pressure and weight management.

Questions to ask your doctor
Helps patients ask important questions about high blood pressure.

What can I do to improve my blood pressure?
Use this piece to highlight five lifestyle modifications that can improve blood pressure for patients diagnosed with hypertension.

Why should I limit sodium?
Helps patients understand why too much salt can cause problems, gives tips on which foods to avoid and how to cook tasty food using less salt.

RESOURCES TO USE FOR PATIENT-GENERATED HEALTH DATA (PI_CCTPE_3; please note that this measure is only applicable to practices using 2015 Edition CERHT)
Seven-day recording log
Helps patients record their blood pressure readings.
MIPS performance category: Improvement Activities

Scoring: 15 percent of total MIPS composite score

The Improvement Activities (IA) category is a new area of reporting that incentivizes practices to delve more deeply to find opportunities to improve care delivery, access, and patient engagement. For more information on IA and MIPS scoring, see the AMA’s MIPS Action Plan.

Suggested hypertension relevant IA

- Chronic care and preventative care management for empaneled patients (IA_PM_13)
  - Proactively manage chronic and preventative care for empaneled patients that could include one or more of the following:
    - Provide patients annually with an opportunity for development and/or adjustment of an individualized plan of care as appropriate to age and health status, including health risk appraisal; gender, age and condition-specific preventive care services; and plan of care for chronic conditions
    - Use condition-specific pathways for care of chronic conditions (e.g., hypertension, diabetes, depression, asthma and heart failure) with evidence-based protocols to guide treatment to target, such as a CDC-recognized diabetes prevention program
    - Use pre-visit planning to optimize preventive care and team management of patients with chronic conditions
    - Use panel support tools (registry functionality) to identify services due
    - Use predictive analytical models to predict risk, onset and progression of chronic diseases
    - Use reminders and outreach (e.g., phone calls, emails, postcards, patient portals and community health workers where available) to alert and educate patients about services due, and/or routine medication reconciliation
  - Use of certified EHR to capture patient-reported outcomes (IA_BE_1)
    - In support of improving patient access, performing additional activities that enable capture of patient-reported outcomes (e.g., home blood pressure, blood glucose logs, food diaries, at-risk health factors such as tobacco or alcohol use, etc.) or patient activation measures through use of certified EHR technology, containing this data in a separate queue for clinician recognition and review.
  - Use evidence-based decision aids to support shared decision-making (IA_BE_12)
    - Use evidence-based decision aids to support shared decision-making.
  - Completion of the AMA STEPS Forward™ program (IA_PSPA_9)
    - Completion of the AMA STEPS Forward program.

Target: BP

The AMA has tools and resources that can be used for evidence-based decision-making, reporting patient outcomes and physician education. Below are some of the resources available through Target: BP that will help achieve success in the IA category.

RESOURCES TO USE FOR EACH RELEVANT IA

- IA_BE_1, Use of certified EHR to capture patient-reported outcomes
  - Seven-day recording log
    Helps patients record their blood pressure readings.
- IA_BE_12, Use evidence-based decision aids to support shared decision-making
  - BP treatment algorithm website
    Outlines recommended treatment for each BP threshold.
  - Understand your BP numbers
    Helps patients determine what category their blood pressure falls under.
  - What can I do to improve my high blood pressure?
    Highlights five lifestyle modifications that can improve blood pressure for patients diagnosed with hypertension.
• IA_PSPA_9, Completion of AMA STEPS Forward program
  • “Improving blood pressure control” module CME module on how to Measure, Act, Partner (M.A.P.) to help patients control blood pressure and ultimately prevent heart disease.

**OTHER NOTES**
• IA_BE_4 would be applicable if using an enhanced patient portal to collect self-monitored blood pressure logs and provide blood pressure management/medication advice
• IA_PM_13 is applicable if using Target: BP program or tools to provide patients with individual plan of care for hypertension management annually or to guide treatment of hypertension

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**MIPS performance category: Cost**

**Scoring:** 10 percent of total MIPS composite score

The “Cost” performance category uses your Medicare claims data to collect Medicare payment information for the care you gave to beneficiaries during a specific period of time. CMS will calculate your “Cost” category score, and you don’t have to submit any data. For more information, see the AMA’s Cost FAQ.