

# Hypertension Certification Overview

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## **BACKGROUND**

The mission of the American Heart Association (AHA) Hypertension Certification program is to improve the outcomes of patients with complex or difficult-to-treat hypertension while partnering with medical practices, incorporating best practices and implementing evidence-based treatment guidelines. The overarching goals of the certified Hypertension Center encompasses the patient, provider, research and training opportunities, and engagement with insurers and payors. The Certification is focused on enhancing hypertension patient care and is designed to evaluate each medical practice against a professional set of criteria based on demonstrated adherence to key standards and a rigorous review process.

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## **BENEFITS**

### **For Patients**

- Provide patients with access to centers focused on treating complex hypertension and its co-morbidities
- Provide patients with confidence that the centers can provide the most effective treatment strategies based on current translational, evidence-based research in hypertension
- Provide patients with assurance that the center has been vetted and is recognized by the American Heart Association, based on professional evaluation criteria designed by hypertension experts

### **For Providers**

- Promote and recognize the role and function of those physicians who are certified as specialists in Clinical Hypertension
- Provide a referral source for non-hypertension specialist physicians and other health care providers treating patients with resistant hypertension and its co-morbidities
- Establish a national coordinating network of American Heart Association Certified Hypertension Centers for physicians and other health care providers
- Establish a pathway for appropriate reimbursement for those health care professionals treating patients with resistant hypertension and its co-morbidities
- Provide direct access to AHA-sponsored live and online educational activities

### **Clinical Research and Training Opportunities**

- Provide centers with the opportunity to participate in hypertension clinical research studies
- Serve as an impetus to expand hypertension training programs at all levels
- Utilize the outcomes of these studies to develop needs assessments for hypertension health care providers and develop appropriate educational activities

### **Insurance Provider and Payment Engagement**

- Establishes collaborative and educational liaison with payors
- Provides standardized criteria for a hypertension specialty practice
- Provides information on effective treatment strategies and protocols

## **CERTIFICATION TYPES**

There are two types of Hypertension Certifications available, each with a 3-year certification cycle:

- **Comprehensive Hypertension Center** These Centers are in either academic medical centers or in large multi-specialty clinics. These centers may exist independently or as part of larger divisions or departments.
- **Hypertension Practice Center** These Centers are either private or group medical practices.

*See next page for a detailed breakdown of eligibility and certification requirements for Comprehensive and Practice Centers.*

## **CERTIFICATION TERM**

Both Comprehensive and Practice Centers are certified for a three-year term.

## **FEES**

**Comprehensive Hypertension Center** - \$2,700 for a three-year certification term.

**Hypertension Practice Center** - \$1,200 for a three-year certification term.

To learn more about Hypertension Center Certification visit [www.heart.org/certification](http://www.heart.org/certification) or contact us at [accreditation@heart.org](mailto:accreditation@heart.org)

REQUIREMENT NUMBER	HYPERTENSION CENTER CERTIFICATION ELIGIBILITY OVERVIEW	PRACTICE CENTER	COMPREHENSIVE CENTER
1	Director must be a Certified as a Hypertension Specialist by the American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program. (Resources located here: <a href="http://www.ptcny.com">www.ptcny.com</a> )	√	√
2	Director must hold an academic appointment		√
3	Director must be a current Premium Professional or Premium Professional Plus member of the American Heart Association with membership on the Council on Hypertension. ( <a href="http://www.professional.heart.org">www.professional.heart.org</a> )	√	√
4	Practice must be registered for the Target: BP program ( <a href="http://www.targetbp.org">www.targetbp.org</a> ).	√	√
5	Majority of practice must be devoted to patients with hypertension and related disorders.	√	√
6	Recognition as referral and treatment resource for resistant and secondary hypertension, and alternative therapies.	√	√
7	Personnel are competent in recording blood pressure and in maintaining equipment for both the Center and self-monitoring for patients	√	√
8	Performs and interprets 24-hour ambulatory blood pressure recording	√	√
9	Has facilities available to perform extensive multi-specialty examination and treatment to assess complicated hypertension problems	√	√
10	Participates in investigator-initiated research and/or in appropriate multi-center trials and observational studies	√	√
11	Center performs ongoing quality improvement	√	√
12	Personnel participate in ongoing hypertension educational activities	√	√
13	Personnel participate in teaching hypertension to medical students, house officers and fellows		√
14	Personnel participate in the publication of scholarly articles or abstracts related to the field of hypertension and related disorders		√

REQUIREMENT NUMBER	HYPERTENSION CENTER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENT OVERVIEW	PRACTICE CENTER	COMPREHENSIVE CENTER
1	The Hypertension Center defines its mission, goals, scope, and organizational structure. Outlines rationale for application and desired pursuit of certification as a Hypertension Center	√	√
2	Center performs or has access to risk assessments, diagnostic evaluation tools, and interventions to perform extensive multi-specialty examination and treatment to assess complicated hypertension process.	√	√
3	The Center has a process in place to monitor staff competence in the accurate measurement and documentation of blood pressure.	√	√
4	The Center has a process in place for the selection of independently validated stationary blood pressure monitoring equipment.	√	√
5	The Center has a process in place that addresses patient education including the anticipation of the patient's individualized needs and patient-centered goals.	√	√
6	The Center has a protocol for 24-Hour Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring.	√	√
7	The Center performs ongoing quality improvement measuring adherence to evidence-based guidelines aimed at improving hypertension control and related outcomes of the patient population.	√	√
8	The Center's staff have education, experience, training or certification consistent with scope of hypertension services and care provided.	√	√
9	The Center participates in research activities		√