



KEEPING EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL, ESPECIALLY PATIENT BLOOD PRESSURE

PETALUMA HEALTH CENTER

Million Hearts® in Action

[Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts® Goals]



How does the staff at Petaluma Health Center help so many of their hypertension patients keep their high blood pressure under control? They talk a lot – to each other and to their patients. But they also spend a lot of time listening. Nurses and medical assistants work closely with nutritionists, pharmacists and behavioral therapists to ensure patients get the best treatment. But when patients do veer off course with their medication routines, the staff follow specific protocol to investigate how it happened. When having conversations with patients, they ask the right questions to garner meaningful information. Petaluma’s team-based approach to monitoring hypertension patients has resulted in a 74 percent management and control rate. It also has earned them recognition as a Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champion.



One of the things we continue to learn is that to make any improvement, we really need to listen to patients. We need to ask them the right questions, and we need to listen.”

– Jessica Moore, *FNP, associate clinical director for Petaluma Health Center*



[Fast Facts¹]

- One in three U.S. adults, or 85.7 million Americans, have high blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke.
- Of those with who have hypertension, about 76 percent use medication. But only 54.4 percent of those people have the condition under control.
- Projections show that by 2030, about 41.4 percent of U.S. adults will have high blood pressure, an increase of 8.4 percent from 2012 estimates.

¹Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2017 Update A Report From the American Heart Association:
<http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/circulationaha/early/2017/01/25/CIR.0000000000000485.full.pdf>
Pages e135, 136, 140

[What We Did]

Petaluma Health Center uses health care teams to increase how often they come into contact with patients. Data access is provided to all team members, who include:

- Nurses and medical assistants, who are empowered to provide care, medication adjustments, and education during patient visits.
- Nutritionists who provide guidance about making lifestyle changes and healthier food choices than can spur weight loss.
- In-house pharmacists, patient navigators and behavioral therapists who can help clear hurdles hindering patients from taking their medication.

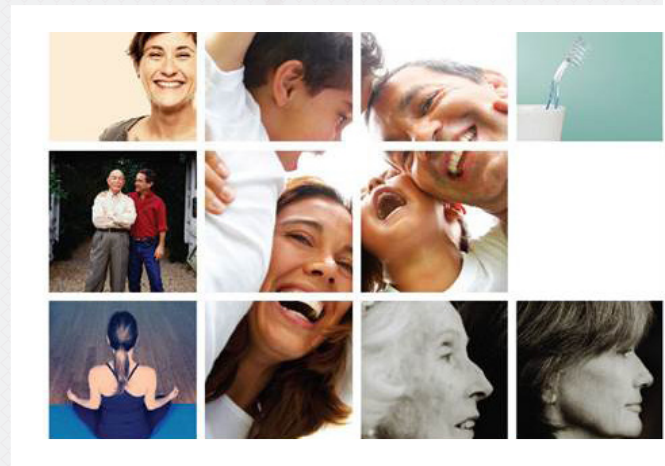
In addition to frequent collaboration with each other, team members also will use physical reminders to raise attention about concerns over a patient's blood pressure. Some will literally flag a patient's chart with a sticky note, or place one on a provider's computer monitor, to make sure the concern is addressed during the appointment, even if hypertension was not the primary reason for the patient's visit.

[What We Accomplished]

- Of Petaluma Health Center's 2,760 patients with hypertension, 74 percent of them had the condition under control as of March 2017. This rate is an increase from three years earlier (March 2014), when the blood pressure control rate was 66 percent of the center's 1990 hypertension patients.²
- In 2015, Million Hearts® recognized Petaluma Health Center as one of 18 "Hypertension Control Champions."

[What We Learned]

- The most significant barrier to hypertension control is medication adherence. Some patients with high blood pressure don't understand what their prescriptions do, or the risks of uncontrolled hypertension. Others may finish a 30- or 60-day supply of pills, feel better, and mistakenly believe they are finished with treatment. A fear of side effects also can hamper medication adherence.
- Education is key in helping patients stick to their medication regimen. Petaluma's team approach kicks into play here, too, with every team member – from the medical assistant, nurses, pharmacists – playing a role in helping to explain how important medicines can be to improve the quality and, potentially, the longevity of lives.
- Don't assume and make sure to ask the right questions. Petaluma staff follows a protocol to help ensure patients take their medication. Staff members are trained on different ways to engage with patients in a comfortable, non-punitive way that can extract significant details about their drug routine.



[What We Are Doing Now]

Petaluma continues using its multidisciplinary team approach to help hypertension patients control their blood pressure and lower their risks for heart attack and stroke. They are aiming to boost their current 74 percent adherence rate.

Additionally, Petaluma is working on future outreach opportunities with its local health department and community partners on initiatives to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

² Petaluma Health Center