

# CASE STUDY: Mortenson

## MEETING EMPLOYEES WHERE THEY ARE WITH HYPERTENSION & STROKE EDUCATION

### THE OPPORTUNITY

More than half of U.S adults have high blood pressure. COVID-19 has further exacerbated the challenges of managing chronic diseases such as hypertension, while also creating new risks.

COVID-19 also forced Mortenson Construction Company to adjust how they reach employees working from home, and as part of that, how to support employee health. With 70% of heart attacks occurring at home, we know that families play a critical role in the emergency response during cardiac events.

### THE ACTION

Mortenson recognized a unique opportunity to include families in life-saving education and teamed with the American Heart Association to provide a virtual blood pressure and stroke awareness training during the company's morning safety huddle. Leadership encouraged employees to invite their families and partners join the virtual workshop, further increasing the reach in their communities.

During a 30 minute virtual training, the AHA presented on:

- Know Your Numbers - including guidance on how to accurately use a self-monitoring blood pressure cuff at home
- Consequences of high blood pressure and recognizing warning signs and symptoms of stroke
- Lifestyle adjustments to help you reach your blood pressure goal

### KEY LEARNINGS

#### MEET YOUR EMPLOYEES WHERE THEY ARE

Leading this training during a pandemic presented challenges with the workforce not being in one place. Rather than not offering this benefit to all employees, Mortenson was committed to reaching employees in a way that worked for them. That meant being innovative with a digital approach that ensured the education was engaging, easily digestible and informative.

#### DON'T LIMIT YOUR AUDIENCE - BRING IN FAMILIES & FRIENDS

When possible, incorporating family and friends into health conversations helps reinforce the message, encourages accountability and increases the likelihood of positive behavior change.



**3 STEPS FOR REACHING YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE GOALS**

**1 CHECK Your BP Numbers**

| Blood Pressure Category                    | Systolic mm Hg (upper #) | and    | Diastolic mm Hg (lower #) |
|--|--------------------------|--------|---------------------------|
| Normal                                     | less than 120            | and    | less than 80              |
| Elevated                                   | 120-129                  | and    | less than 80              |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 1 | 130-139                  | or     | 80-89                     |
| High Blood Pressure (Hypertension) Stage 2 | 140 or higher            | or     | 90 or higher              |
| Hypertensive crisis                        | higher than 180          | and/or | higher than 120           |

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE / STAGE 1**  
Recommendations: 10-year heart disease and stroke risk assessment. If less than 10% risk, lifestyle changes, reassessed in 3-6 months. If higher, lifestyle changes and medication with monthly follow-ups until BP controlled.

**HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE / STAGE 2**  
Recommendations: Lifestyle changes and 2 different classes of medicine, with monthly follow-ups until BP is controlled.

**HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS** Consult your doctor immediately

**3 CONTROL & Reach Your BP Goal**

KEY LIFESTYLE OPPORTUNITIES TO LOWER YOUR BLOOD PRESSURE:

- REDUCE WEIGHT:  $\downarrow$  5 mm Hg
- PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:  $\downarrow$  5-8 mm Hg
- ADOPT DASH DIET:  $\downarrow$  11 mm Hg
- MODERATION OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION:  $\downarrow$  4 mm Hg
- LOWER SODIUM INTAKE:  $\downarrow$  5-6 mm Hg

**2 CHANGE & Recheck**

- Consent to the process of improving your BP
- Set small, achievable goals and watch your numbers improve.

**OTHER TIPS FOR REACHING YOUR GOAL:**

- Keep the long-term goal in mind: lower risks and a healthier life
- Get support from friends and family
- Celebrate each small change and improvement!

HEART.ORG/BP

| BLOOD PRESSURE CATEGORY                               | SYSTOLIC mm Hg (upper number) | and    | DIASTOLIC mm Hg (lower number) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|
| NORMAL  | LESS THAN 120                 | and    | LESS THAN 80                   |
| ELEVATED  | 120 - 129                     | and    | LESS THAN 80                   |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 1            | 130 - 139                     | or     | 80 - 89                        |
| HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE (HYPERTENSION) STAGE 2            | 140 OR HIGHER                 | or     | 90 OR HIGHER                   |
| HYPERTENSIVE CRISIS (consult your doctor immediately) | HIGHER THAN 180               | and/or | HIGHER THAN 120                |

*" Thank you! I was just discussing this with my significant other. We have a blood pressure machine but were never sure if we were using it correctly."*

- Workshop participant, June 2020

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