



# MAGNETIC REMINDERS ABOUT HYPERTENSION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

## Million Hearts in Action

[ Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts Goals ]

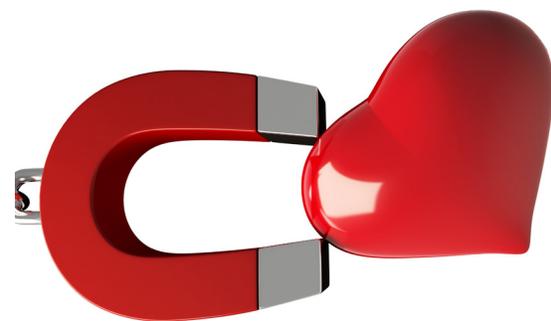


A small, simple change in workplace procedures at Indiana health care centers has resulted in huge benefits for patients with high blood pressure. The medical staff at Open Door Health Services are using red heart-shaped magnets as reminders to follow-up on patients with hypertension. The magnets are located inside the doorframe of each exam room but get placed outside the door if a patient's blood pressure measures high. Dr. Dorothy Boersma, chief medical officer for Open Door Health Services, got the idea from a Minnesota clinic physician who described the strategy in a success story podcast by the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. Today, the simple placement of those red hearts continues to help improve treatment and care for patients with high blood pressure and other serious health problems related to their hypertension.



**We already had a policy or a procedure that if the blood pressure was elevated, it was supposed to be repeated before the patient left, but what the red heart does is help remind us to do that.”**

*– Dorothy Boersma, chief medical officer,  
Open Door Health Services*



### [ Fast Facts<sup>i</sup> ]

- High blood pressure is a major risk factor for stroke and cardiovascular disease, but controlling it can be a key to the prevention of those chronic illnesses.
- About 32.6 percent of all U.S. adults ages 20 or older have high blood pressure. That equates to about 80 million people.
- About 17.2 percent of all adults do not know they have high blood pressure.
- Projections show that by 2030, about 41.4 percent of U.S. adults will have hypertension.

<sup>i</sup>AHA Statistical Update. Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2016 Update. A Report From the American Heart Association. Numerous authors. Pages e135-137. (also <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/133/4/e38#sec-161>)

## [ What We Did ]

- Open Door Health Services established a “Red Hearts” campaign to help flag for doctors any patient with elevated blood pressure. The red heart magnet attached to the door frame inside each exam room gets moved to the outside of the door if a patient’s blood pressure measures high – anything above 140/90 – during the person’s visit.
- The magnets serve as reminders for physicians to evaluate the patient’s blood pressure measurement.
- In mobile clinics without metal doors, sticky notes are used.
- If the red heart is still on the outside of the door when the patient is ready to be checked out, it signals to a medical assistant that the person’s blood pressure should be re-checked before leaving the clinic.

## [ What We Accomplished ]

Using a simple visual cue – a red heart-shaped magnet placed outside an exam room door – doctors are reminded to review the patient’s blood pressure and discuss it during the visit, even if the person came to the clinic for another reason. This helps ensure the patient receives proper follow-up instructions when necessary.

## [ What We Learned ]

Simple, low-tech products can be just as effective at helping to save lives as innovative and more expensive technology. Open Door Health Services implemented a cost-effective system that is producing powerful and meaningful results to help remind medical professionals to check in with patients about their high blood pressure.



## [ What We Are Doing Now ]

Open Door Health Services continues to use the door magnets during office visits, but the practice also has turned them into a marketing tool. It now gives away custom-made heart magnets stamped with the clinic’s name and phone number to serve as prompts to patients to stay on top of any chronic health problems they have, and to make appointments when necessary.

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