



*Bless Your Heart*

## About the Million Hearts® Initiative

Million Hearts® is a national initiative to prevent one million heart attacks and strokes in the U.S. over five years. Launched by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in September 2011, it aligns existing efforts, and creates new programs to improve health across communities and help Americans live longer, more productive lives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), co-leaders of Million Hearts within HHS, are working alongside other federal agencies and private-sector organizations to make a long-lasting impact against cardiovascular disease.

### Cardiovascular Disease in the U.S.

Cardiovascular disease, a broad term for all diseases that affect the heart or blood vessels, includes heart attack and stroke as well as conditions such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, and aortic aneurism.

- Together, heart disease and stroke are among the most widespread and costly health problems facing the nation today, accounting for more than \$444 billion in health care expenditures and lost productivity in 2010 alone.
- Many major risk factors — including blood pressure, cholesterol, smoking, and obesity — are controllable, and there are many important ways to lower risk of cardiovascular disease.



## The Issue

Heart disease and stroke are the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States, making cardiovascular disease responsible for 1 of every 3 deaths in the country. Americans suffer more than two million heart attacks and strokes each year, and 2,200 people die from cardiovascular disease everyday. Further, heart disease and stroke are among the leading causes of disability in our country, with more than three million people reporting serious illness and decreased quality of life.

## Our Goals

Preventing one million heart attacks and strokes by 2017:

- **Empowering Americans to make healthy choices** such as preventing tobacco use and reducing sodium and trans fat consumption. This can help reduce the number of people who need medical treatment such as blood pressure or cholesterol medications to prevent heart attacks and strokes.
- **Improving care** for people who do need treatment by encouraging a targeted focus on the “ABCS”— Aspirin for people at risk, **B**lood pressure control, **C**holesterol management and **S**moking cessation—which address the major risk factors for cardiovascular disease and can help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

## Our Support

Million Hearts is a public-private initiative that involves multiple federal agencies and key private organizations, including the American Heart Association, the American Pharmacists’ Association, the YMCA, Walgreens and UnitedHealthCare. Million Hearts hopes to secure commitment and participation from many more partners in healthcare, public health, industry and government. These partnerships will help Million Hearts leverage and advance existing investments in cardiovascular disease prevention.

## How to be a One in a Million Hearts partner

To strengthen existing support for the initiative, HHS is seeking commitments and participation from many more organizations to target improvements in both clinical preventive practice and community prevention. We all have a role to play in achieving the Million Hearts goal. First, sign the pledge at <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov>. Second, find yourself in the table on the next page and start to take these steps to help us save a million hearts.

**Among the growing number of partners are the following:** Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality • Alliance for Patient Medication Safety • American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy • American College of Cardiology • America’s Health Insurance Plans, including Aetna, Cigna, WellPoint • American Heart Association • American Medical Association • American Nurses Association • American Pharmacists Association • American Pharmacists Association Foundation • Association of Black Cardiologists • Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (co-leading agency) • Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (co-leading agency) • Health Resources and Services Administration • HHS Office of the Secretary • Indian Health Service • Kaiser Permanente • National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations • National Committee of Quality Assurance • National Community Pharmacists Association • National Consumers League • National Institutes of Health • Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT • Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration • UnitedHealthcare • YMCA • Walgreens

Pharmacies and Pharmacists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor refill patterns for hypertension and cholesterol medications</li> <li>• Discuss medications with patients, and actively engage in counseling to improve medication adherence</li> <li>• Offer blood pressure monitoring and educational resources to consumers</li> </ul>
Physicians and Healthcare Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure your performance on the ABCS</li> <li>• Use HIT to provide clinical decision support, registries and patient reminders to encourage proper use of meds, blood pressure and cholesterol monitoring and healthy nutrition and physical activity habits</li> <li>• Develop team skills in med adherence and behavior change</li> <li>• Focus on the ABCS with patients and their families</li> <li>• Emphasize the power of controlling high blood pressure and managing cholesterol to prevent heart attack and stroke</li> <li>• Ask about smoking habits; offer counseling and tools to help smokers quit</li> <li>• Prescribe aspirin for those who would benefit and confirm at each visit that your patients remain on it</li> </ul>
Retailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer blood pressure monitoring and educational resources to consumers</li> <li>• Post ABCS in retail clinics</li> <li>• Link medical data to consumer prompts at points of purchase</li> </ul>
Healthcare Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support active dialogue between clinicians and patients about appropriate use of aspirin therapy, blood pressure control and cholesterol management</li> <li>• Use HIT to drive quality improvement through reminders, decision support and registries</li> </ul>
Insurers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rework new models of care to pay for cholesterol and high blood pressure medications</li> <li>• Collect and share data for quality improvement</li> <li>• Improve public awareness through education</li> </ul>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate the public and policymakers</li> <li>• Support community transformation through grants</li> <li>• Expand coverage for the uninsured</li> <li>• Deliver model preventive health services through community health centers</li> <li>• Test new models of care and payment</li> <li>• Strengthen effective care of the ABCS</li> </ul>
Advocacy Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor whether progress is being made and sustained</li> <li>• Drive awareness of and support for Million Hearts and its goal</li> </ul>
Foundations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support consumer and provider outreach and education</li> <li>• Offer project-based resources</li> <li>• Convene partner coalitions</li> </ul>
Faith Groups and Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start a conversation about the importance of heart health and preventing heart disease and stroke</li> <li>• Provide Million Hearts tools and other resources to congregations and community members</li> <li>• Build a network to support and monitor individuals' success in achieving the ABCS</li> </ul>
The Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to your doctor/pharmacist if you have questions or concerns about your medications and follow their instructions</li> </ul>

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