

MAKING AN IMPACT:

*Driving Clinical Quality Improvement
in Heart Health in Community Health Centers*



10 Years of NACHC's Collaboration with the Million Hearts® Initiative 2014-2024

Between 2014 and 2024, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Million Hearts® initiative, partnered with primary care associations (PCAs), health center-controlled networks (HCCNs), and community health centers to enhance cardiovascular care and outcomes for patients.

NACHC's Million Hearts® initiative focused on improving blood pressure control and cholesterol management, the leading risk factors for cardiovascular disease by:

- Translating cardiovascular disease prevention and treatment evidence into practice with underserved patients in rural and urban communities
- Identifying improvement opportunities with care teams and developing tools, resources, staffing, and policies for effective patient care
- Illuminating, sharing, and scaling the most impactful and feasible implementation strategies
- Improving blood pressure control and cholesterol management to reduce health disparities, save lives, and lower health system costs

NACHC advanced the understanding of how to address cardiovascular health in community health centers. The initiative focused on:

- Addressing undiagnosed hypertension
- Accelerating blood pressure control
- Implementing self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring
- Improving blood pressure control among African Americans
- Improving cholesterol management
- Optimizing use of statin therapy to prevent and treat cardiovascular disease

Improving Heart Health & Quality of Care

NACHC and its partners designed and executed NACHC-led large-scale implementation projects, national educational forums, and pilot initiatives that explored emerging best practices, innovative care models, and new technologies. The learnings in clinical practice, quality improvement, and patient outcomes were shared in national peer-reviewed journals, dozens of tools and resources, national education forums and webinars, and NACHC and partner communication channels.



Numbers at a Glance

- **32%** reduction in undiagnosed hypertension
- **13%** increase in blood pressure control among >40,000 African Americans
- **80%** of patients at high risk for a cardiovascular event prescribed statin therapy
- **26%** increase in cholesterol screening



Advancing Clinical Practice in Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention

- Developed clinical criteria to identify potentially undiagnosed hypertension that was adopted nationally
- Accelerated the adoption of SMBP monitoring nationally
- Closed a gap in statin education with the publication of NACHC's Statin Provider Education Training Package



National Recognition

- **2023 Heart Healthy Stroke Free Award** from the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention for its innovative programs (November 2023)
- **HLTH Foundation's 2024 Techquity Insights Award** for using novel medication intensification measures to improve blood pressure control and reduce disparities (February 2024)



Partners, Products, & Publications

- **60** health centers & **14** PCAs & HCCNs partners
- **384** health centers engaged through learnings opportunities
- **9** peer reviewed journal publications generated **93** citations as of January 2025
- **More than 2 dozen** tools and resources produced for clinical care and quality improvement patients, and health center leadership

Special thanks to the dozens of clinical care teams, quality improvement professionals, and data analysts, at over 60 health centers and 14 PCAs and HCCNs who have worked determinedly with us over the past decade to improve cardiovascular health, save lives, and provide equitable health care delivery. We would also like to acknowledge the CDC and the following organizations who served as clinical advisors: AT Still University, American Medical Association, Health Resources Services Administration, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, YMCA of the USA, and Cedars Sinai Medical Center, for their collaboration and support during NACHC's Million Hearts® journey.

NACHC Million Hearts® 2014-2024

2014-2015

Undiagnosed Hypertension “Hiding in Plain Sight” (HIPS) Project

NACHC convened experts to develop clinical criteria clarifying guidance for hypertension diagnosis. These criteria were built into clinical decision support and led to a new undiagnosed hypertension measure; both were scaled by population health management platforms used by more than 1,000 health centers in over 40 states. Undiagnosed hypertension was reduced by 32% in the project, with over 4,300 patients properly diagnosed with hypertension.

2016-2018

Accelerating Self-Measured Blood Pressure Monitoring (SMBP) Project

NACHC partnered with HCCNs, health centers, local health departments, and local YMCAs to test innovative clinical-community care models to support using SMBP in clinical practice. This resulted in a guide for purchasing validated home BP monitors and the widely used NACHC SMBP Implementation Toolkit.

2018-2024

Improving Cholesterol Management

NACHC collaborated with PCAs/HCCNs and health centers to translate the latest evidence-based strategies into practices to improve cholesterol management. This project focused on cholesterol screening, increased use of statin therapy for high-risk groups, and developing and testing new statin education tools. Cholesterol screening increased from 53% to 67% among 151,298 adults. Optimal statin therapy increased from 73.7% to 80.0% among 42,245 high-risk patients.

2021-2024

Million Hearts® Learning Lab

Together with CDC and AMA, NACHC launched and hosted the Million Hearts® Learning Lab, which offered online interactive sessions on the latest guideline and evidence-based practice approaches to cardiovascular health. The program format included self-paced micro-learnings and a live Q&A with continuing education units.

2022-2024

LDL Lab Messaging Project

NACHC collaborated with CDC, Labcorp, Health Efficient, and Zufall Health to develop and pilot test clinical decision support around lab results with patient-centered text and phone messages. The messages successfully encouraged patients with very high LDL cholesterol results who were not on statin therapy to schedule an appointment and receive prescriptions.

2015-2016

Accelerating Blood Pressure Control Project

NACHC supported HCCNs and their participating health centers to improve blood pressure control by implementing interventions from the Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Change Package. On average, health centers improved blood pressure control by 9%, bringing 2,491 patients to control.

2018-2024

Improving Blood Pressure Control in African Americans (BPAA) Project

Informed by the 2017 ACC/AHA Guideline for the Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Management of High Blood Pressure in Adults, NACHC partnered with the AMA, PCAs/ HCCNs, and health centers to improve BP control among African Americans and reduce health disparities. Strategies included increasing the use of combination therapy, improving medication adherence and frequency touchpoints, and SMBP. During the second project cohort, BP control increased an average of 13.2%

2020-2024

SMBP Forum

An outgrowth of the Accelerating Self-Measured Blood Pressure (SMBP) Monitoring Project, NACHC and CDC created the SMBP Forum to further the national SMBP dialogue. Experts and peers from public health, health centers, health systems, academia, and other national associations met quarterly to share best practices and learnings in SMBP implementation with an average attendance of 250/session.

2022-2024

Hypertension Medication Management in Trusted Spaces Project

NACHC, with CDC and Cedars Sinai Medical Center, supported health centers to adapt the Los Angeles Blood Pressure Barbershop care model to a health center context. In this model, a trusted community member helps engage Black and African American adults with high blood pressure with a clinical pharmacist who delivers medication therapy management. All health centers developed meaningful community partnerships; three health centers implemented successful care models that engaged at least 20 patrons of the trusted space.

2023-2024

Creating Actionable Surveillance to Identify Opportunities for CVD Prevention for those with Unmet Social Needs and Elevated Cardiovascular Risk (CVD-SDOH)

NACHC partnered with CDC, Alliance Chicago, and two health centers to develop and test a prototype data model to analyze cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors with demographic and social drivers of health data for population health action and public health surveillance.