

Partnerships to Improve Blood Pressure Control: How Communities and Clinics Work Together

Learn how community health workers and community-based organizations partner with clinics to help patients control their blood pressure, and what makes these partnerships successful.



“We are that step between the clinic and the community. The clinics will directly refer to us, and then we get them [people with hypertension] the resources that they need in the community.”

- Community health organization

The Issue

High blood pressure is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. About half of American adults are living with high blood pressure, and this rate is predicted to rise.

Our Research

We wanted to learn how community-based organizations and community health workers partner with clinics on blood pressure control, and what makes these partnerships successful. To find out, we interviewed community health workers and staff from community-based organizations such as the YMCA and a healthcare access and education agency. We also talked to clinic staff, including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists.

FINDINGS

What do community-clinical partnerships look like?

- Community-based organizations shared flyers and brochures about their blood pressure programs with clinic staff, including pharmacists.
- Community-based organizations invited volunteer pharmacists to educate community members about the medications they were taking; one bilingual pharmacist was asked to do this in Vietnamese.
- Clinics contacted community-based organizations to seek information about blood pressure management programs available in the community.
- Community health workers shared information about their upcoming blood pressure-related events with clinics.
- Community health workers identified people with high blood pressure and referred them to clinics.

TAKE ACTION

If you are a community-based organization or community health worker who would like to partner with a clinic, consider these tips for successful community-clinical partnerships:

- Share information with clinics about resources that you and other community organizations offer and, in turn, ask what clinic resources are available for individuals with hypertension.
- Try to give a presentation about your resources and the ways you could partner at a regular clinic meeting with providers, staff, and administration. Gather information at that meeting about what the clinic's needs are and emphasize shared goals that you can both reach by working together. Highlight the ways in which the partnership could save the clinic time as well as improve patient outcomes.
- Provide scientific evidence that your program is effective, such as results from research studies that have measured the effect of your program, or programs like yours.
- Reach out to your local or state public health department to see if they can help set up a meeting between you and a potential partner or if they have available funding for supporting the partnership.



“Our programs are behavior change-oriented. We highlight [to clinics] that they're pretty cost-effective...especially when it comes to the return on investment for preventing health conditions or improving symptom management.”

- Community health organization

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This work was supported by Grant number DP005531, awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to the Washington State Department of Health. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Department of Health and Human Services.