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Improving Hispanic Heart Health

Please note, this communication applies to Healthy Blue + Medicare℠ (HMO D-SNP) offered by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (Blue Cross NC).

Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority group in the United States, making it vital that we recognize the unique health needs of the population. Take time in February to support American Heart Health Month and explore how your practice can help improve your Hispanic patients' heart health.

What can your practice do to help improve health outcomes for Hispanic patients with heart disease?

- Be proactive about asking if the patient requires interpretation services. No one wants to feel like a burden. By asking and preparing for an interpreter in advance, you are creating a welcoming atmosphere for the patient during their appointment. If you would like to request an interpreter, including sign language, on behalf of your Blue Cross NC patients, call Provider Services. Free interpreter services are also available to members by calling the Member's Services number on the back of their ID card (TTY/TTD **711**) and through the 24/7 NurseLine.
- According to a study by the American Heart Association (**link**), Hispanic persons had similar rates of heart disease compared to Caucasian adults but lower rates of awareness and control. To help increase awareness of their condition, you can ask questions such as:
  - "Have you ever been told that you have high blood pressure or high cholesterol?"
  - "Has a healthcare provider ever discussed with you or prescribed you medication to control your blood pressure or cholesterol levels?"
- Once awareness of the condition is properly understood, educate the patient on any increased health risk factors they might have, especially if they have other conditions like diabetes or obesity.
- Use culturally appropriate examples when discussing lifestyle changes. Select **here** for our conversation guide for tips on how to engage patients who may be from a culture different from your own.
- Encourage scheduling follow-up appointments for blood pressure rechecks or lab work to check cholesterol levels before the patient leaves the office.
- Submit all blood pressure readings using Category II codes on claims or through your practice's preferred supplemental data submission method. Blood pressure care gaps

https://www.bluecrossnc.com/providers/networks-programs/blue-medicare-providers/healthy-blue-medicare

can open and close through the year and are based on the last recorded blood pressure reading of the year. The goal for every patient is a reading below 140/90 mmHg.
- Properly code statin therapy exclusions and prescribe low-cost medications to discourage the use of discount cards.

To learn more about our commitment to health equity, visit **MyDiversePatients.com**. Your patients can also learn more about the unique health needs of Hispanic persons by visiting **takingactionforourhealth.org/**.

Patient care opportunities

If you have questions on improving your quality scores, contact your care consultant or program manager to discuss your opportunities. You also can find patient care opportunities within the **Patient360** application located on Availity Essentials **Payer Spaces**. To access the **Patient360** application you must have the *Patient360* role assignment. From Availity's home page, select **Payer Spaces**, then choose the health plan from the menu. Choose the *Patient360* tile from the **Payer Space Applications** menu and complete the required information on the screen. Gaps in care are in the **Active Alerts** section of the *Member Summary*.

What if I need assistance?

If you have questions about this communication or need assistance with any other item, contact your local provider relationship management associate or call Provider Services on the back of your patient's member ID card.

Through our efforts, we can help deliver high quality, equitable healthcare.