

May 26, 2010

## High Blood Pressure Awareness: Improving Public Health Strategies

Across the world, caring organizations are dedicating specific days of the year to the importance of Blood Pressure Awareness. Since 1984, May has been proclaimed as National Blood Pressure Awareness Month in the United States. The official motto of the blood pressure awareness initiative is "know your numbers."

High blood pressure touches approximately 74.5 million people in the United States; is the most common primary diagnosis in American; is the nation's leading cause of death (1 in six annually among adults); and places huge economic demands on the healthcare system. According to the Consensus report released by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, "A Population-Based Policy and Systems Change Approach to Prevent and Control Hypertension," that number is estimated at \$73.4 billion in direct and indirect costs in 2009. Other researchers estimate that cost reaches \$76.6 billion in direct and indirect costs in 2010, or a 4.2 percent year over year increase.

We are pleased to present this series of articles prepared by key opinion leaders on high blood pressure, with examples of effective community models that work and a personal story about the importance of high blood pressure awareness. This series of articles aids the Foundation in piloting an upcoming program titled "LifeBeat - A WebRadio Magazine" which focuses on providing consumer health information from clinical, policy, and community perspectives to assist health consumers in achieving change in behavior, improving quality and impact of care, and enhancing quality care improvement. The National Black Nurses Foundation continues to pursue its vision to become a leading convener on consumer health by engaging clinical, policy, research, and community advocates to improve health outcomes and patient safety and enhance quality of life through awareness, information, and education.

*If you are interested in submitting articles for consideration for our monthly consumer e-healthformation forum, please contact us at 404.559.6191 or [info@nbnfoundation.us](mailto:info@nbnfoundation.us).*

Here's to your Health and to YOU!



### Control Your Weight, Control Your Blood Pressure

*Keith C. Ferdinand, MD, FACC, FAHA*

If Americans can better identify and control high blood pressure, we can decrease a major cause of more than one-third of all heart attacks and almost half of heart failures in the United States. For many individuals, this will mean taking life-saving, blood-pressure-lowering medication. Nevertheless, the best means of preventing and controlling high blood pressure (hypertension) across the entire population is a healthier lifestyle, including avoiding overweight/obesity, healthier eating, lowered salt consumption, and increased physical activity. [Read More...](#)

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The National Black Nurses Foundation, Inc. (NBNF) undertakes the responsibility of improving the state of nurses, particularly African-American

## Improving Blood Pressure through Faith Community Intervention

*Kenisha Potter, LMSW  
Ella Garner Jackson, RN*



Health challenges and disparities are not new phenomenon in the African-American community. For many years, many African Americans have found themselves and/or their loved ones faced with complicated health challenges and lingering health questions. Questions regarding their predisposition to certain diseases, personal risk factors, which healthcare professionals to choose, and whether they can afford needed health care are just a few of the health challenges that this community faces. African Americans face alarming rates of disease prevalence when it comes to hypertension (high blood pressure), posing a burden for many African Americans. If hypertension is left untreated it may result in kidney disease, heart disease, or stroke. [Read More...](#)



## Lifestyle and Hypertension

*C. Alicia Georges, EdD, RN, FAAN*

We constantly hear that our lifestyle determines how we thrive in our environment. More often than not, we are bombarded about ways to improve our lifestyle and habits and the effect on our health status. These effects may be positive or negative. They impact our safety, quality of life, and even how long we live. Your lifestyle is an important factor in high blood pressure control. What we eat, what happens at work -- at home, and how we use our leisure time make up our lifestyle. Making thoughtful choices and decisions about our lifestyle and habits can save our lives. [Read More...](#)

## I Have a Confession - A Blood Pressure Story

*Joia Crear-Perry, MD, FACOG*



On April 28, 2010 at 6:30 PM, my cell phone rang. It was my mother. "I have a confession," she stated. As I sat in a crowded restaurant, I calmly asked what the confession was. "Well," she continued, "for the last few years I have had these episodes where I kinda black out." I stepped out of the restaurant so that I could hear my mother - the 35 year pharmacist calling from work at the hospital. "The episodes are more frequent and one occurred this morning around 4 AM," she stated. Now, I could have stopped her at that moment to ask why the over 12 hour delay in telling me this. But being a physician and a black female, I knew the answer was that is when she had time to fit the call in. She went on, "This time I decided to take my blood pressure and it was 211/95." She was taking all her blood pressure medications as prescribed and decided to take an extra pill and go back to sleep. I am an OB/Gyn. That means we tend not to get too excited about things because we always have to be the calmest person in the room. that being said, I calmly said, "Mother, let me call you right back." [Read more...](#)

nurses through cooperative relationship with other similar international nursing organizations across ethnic nurse populations. The Foundation is engaged in activities that include health literacy, health authority models to increase access to care, nurse leadership development, reforming healthcare workforce regulations, and the decrease of cardiovascular disease and related risk factors in underserved, under represented and at-risk populations. For more information, visit [www.nbnfoundation.us](http://www.nbnfoundation.us)

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