

LOWER COSTS AND BETTER CARE ARE RESULT OF GEORGIA PROGRAM

Treating low income residents with high blood pressure reduces the expected number of adverse events such as stroke and heart attack and saves money

Public Health Problem

- High blood pressure is a major cause of heart attack, stroke, kidney and heart failure.
- Lifestyle changes, such as healthy eating and increased physical activity, combined with medication when prescribed, can control blood pressure and prevent adverse events such as heart attack and stroke.
- People with less education and low incomes are not as likely as others to have their blood pressure under control, partly because they cannot afford regular care and medications.

Program

- The Georgia Stroke and Heart Attack Prevention Program provides services to low income patients with high blood pressure.
- Patients receive intense monitoring, health assessments, and lifestyle counseling and treatment that are based on established protocols for blood pressure treatment and on the essential elements of health care described in the Chronic Care Model.
- Prescribed medicines are provided at low or no cost. Nurse case-managers monitor blood pressure, encourage regular clinic visits, and work with patients to help them take their medicine regularly.

Impact

- Program participants had better blood pressure control, lower treatment costs for those who received treatment, and lower overall costs per eligible patient according to an evaluation funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- The rate of expected adverse events such as heart attack or stroke was reduced by half in program participants, compared to people who received no preventive care. When compared to patients receiving usual care, the rate was cut by slightly less than half.
- For the 15,000 patients in the Stroke and Heart Attack Prevention Program costs were an average of \$138 less per patient annually, compared with the cost of usual care. If these results included the costs of lost productivity and death, the program's demonstrated cost savings would likely be even higher.

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