

ADDRESSING HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE TO REDUCE HEALTH DISPARITIES IN CENTRAL TEXAS UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

- American Heart Association and Abbott announce new initiative to advance health equity, fight high blood pressure and chronic conditions in greater Austin area

AUSTIN, May 18, 2021 — The [American Heart Association](#), the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health for all, and the global healthcare company Abbott, today announced a new multi-year initiative to reduce high blood pressure and chronic diseases affecting historically underserved local communities in Austin, Texas. The initiative is made possible through a generous financial contribution from Abbott, and will support three Federally Qualified Healthcare Clinical Systems (FQHCs) in Central Texas in providing educational resources, support and self-monitoring devices necessary for high-risk hypertensive and diabetic patients to manage their blood pressure, glucose levels and health behaviors. [Hypertension](#), or high blood pressure, is known as a "silent killer," and often has no signs or symptoms. If left uncontrolled, hypertension can increase a person's risk for heart disease, stroke, heart failure, kidney disease, pregnancy complications and cognitive decline or dementia later in life.

Nearly one in two adults have high blood pressure, or hypertension, yet only about one in four have it under control. Black Americans and people of Hispanic background living in the U.S. are 40% more likely to have the condition and are at least three times more likely to die from heart disease caused by high blood pressure and stroke than their white counterparts. However, hypertension is a preventable risk factor for heart disease and stroke.

"Successful hypertension management requires individuals to regularly monitor their blood pressure results so that they can learn how their environment and daily choices impact their numbers. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people may be participating in less physical activity and eating more high fat, sodium-laden foods. Those behaviors quickly impact a person's blood pressure," said Philip Adamson, M.D., chief medical officer of Abbott's heart failure business, which has offices in Austin. "Abbott and American Heart Association share a commitment to health equity, and we look forward to working together to extend the reach of health education and resources to the people who need it, now more than ever."

Regular blood pressure checks at a doctor's office are difficult for many. Allowing patients to monitor their health at home could ultimately save their lives. However, they may not have the resources to purchase at-home blood pressure monitors and other critical supplies.

The multi-year initiative will focus on AHA's work with several of Austin's community health centers combating chronic disease through improved clinical systems, education, guidance and resources including self-monitoring devices.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to many longstanding disparities in our healthcare systems. This program will seek to close gaps and provide life-saving information and resources to the people that need it the most," said Greg Weaver, Austin volunteer board chair for the Association and executive vice president of Catellus Development Corporation. "We will fight against this silent killer and impact even more lives."

The program has a specific goal of reaching at least 46,000 patients living in Central Texas before 2022, including at least 30,000 who are uninsured or ineligible for Medicaid and considered to be high-risk patients in Austin's healthcare system.

About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public's health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on [heart.org](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About Abbott

Abbott has a clear focus on innovating for access and affordability, with the goal of improving the lives of more than a third of all the people on Earth each year through its [2030 Sustainability Plan](#). An important part of this work is advancing health equity, working side-by-side with the communities we serve to address health disparities and tackle barriers to health. This includes efforts across our business and in partnership with others to expand access to technology, quality care and nutrition, and to advance STEM and health education to inspire a diverse and innovative next generation. To learn more, please visit [abbott.com/sustainability](#).

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For further information: AHA: Jerreta Hartfield, Jerreta.hartfield@heart.org, 210-391-0189; Abbott: Shelley Lange, Shelley.Lange@abbott.com, 612-346-3514
