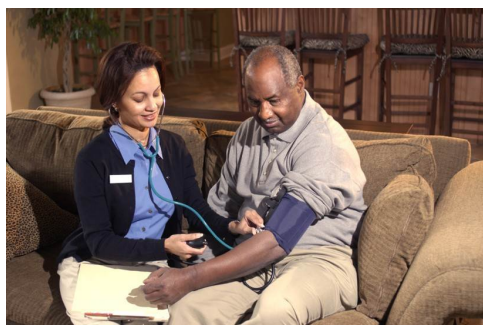


# Health Disparities in the Medicare Population

## Hypertension

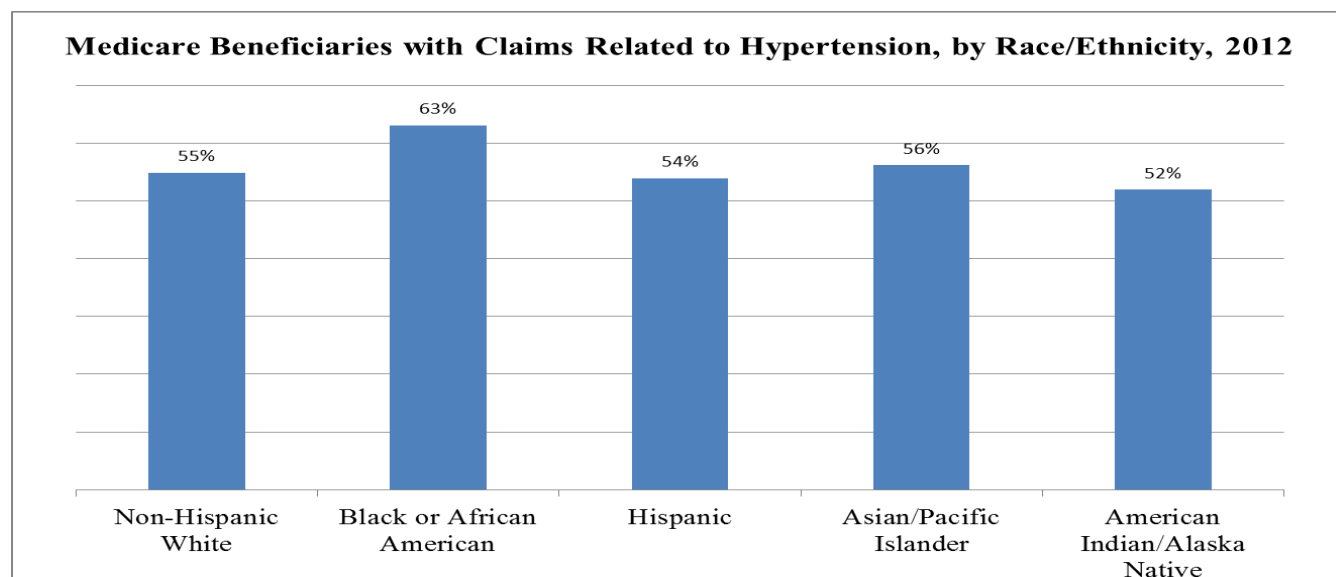


Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is one of the most common diseases in the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that approximately 70 million Americans have hypertension, roughly 1 in every 3 adults aged 18 years or older. The prevalence of hypertension increases with age, from 7% in the 18 to 39 year age group to 67% in those over 60.<sup>1</sup> Hypertension is the most important modifiable risk factor for coronary heart disease (the leading cause of death in the US), stroke (the third leading cause of death), congestive heart failure, and end-stage renal disease. The CDC reports that unmanaged hypertension results in nearly 1000 deaths every day.

In 2012, 55% of all Medicare Fee-For-Service beneficiaries had a diagnosis of hypertension.<sup>2</sup> As shown on the chart below, there are disparities associated with claims related to hypertension. African American beneficiaries had the highest rate of hypertension among all racial and ethnic groups at 63%.

Hypertension can be successfully managed with medication to lower blood pressure but there's only one way to know if you have it: Have your doctor measure it. As part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicare pays for a FREE annual wellness visit which includes blood pressure screening, yet an internal CMS claims' analysis found that fewer than 10% of Medicare beneficiaries took advantage of this benefit in 2012. [Your Guide to Medicare's Preventive Services](#) describes screening benefits that can help you stay healthy.

Watch [Medicare & You: High Blood Pressure and Osteoporosis](#) to learn more.



Source: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Condition Data Warehouse (CCW)  
Note: Population is limited to Medicare Fee-For-Service beneficiaries. RTI Race Code used for analysis.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Hypertension Among Adults in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2011-2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db133.pdf>
2. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Chronic Conditions. <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/Chronic-Conditions/index.html>