Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is one of the most common medical conditions in the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that nearly half (45%) of adults in the United States have hypertension during 2017 - March 2020, and the prevalence increased with age.¹ Hypertension is the most important modifiable risk factor for coronary heart disease (the leading cause of death in the US), stroke, congestive heart failure, and end-stage renal disease. The CDC reports that in 2020, more than 670,000 deaths in the United States had hypertension as a primary or contributing cause.²

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services’ (CMS’s) chronic conditions data from the Mapping Medicare Disparities Tool shows that 64% of people with Medicare fee-for-service (FFS) had claims with a diagnosis of hypertension in 2021, and the prevalence rate varied by age, sex, race and ethnicity, eligibility for Medicare and Medicaid, and geographic areas.³
As shown in Figure 1, the prevalence of hypertension among FFS beneficiaries increased by age: 47, 58, 75, 83 percent for ages <65, 65-74, 75-84, and 85+, respectively.

Figure 2 shows the age standardized prevalence of hypertension by race and ethnicity. Black/African American beneficiaries had the highest prevalence (74%) of hypertension among all racial and ethnic groups, followed by American Indian/Alaska Native (68%), White (64%), Asian/Pacific Islander (62%) and Hispanic (61%) beneficiaries.

Figure 3 shows, the prevalence was lowest in Colorado (52%), Montana and Wyoming (both at 53%), and highest in Louisiana (73%), Alabama and Mississippi (both at 74%).

Figure 4 shows geographic differences exist in hypertension prevalence among minority racial and ethnic groups at the county level.

Hypertension can be successfully managed with lifestyle changes, such as eating a healthy diet and being physically active, as well as with medication to lower blood pressure. There is only one way to know if you have it: have your doctor measure it. As part of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare pays for a free annual wellness visit which includes blood pressure screening, yet a claims analysis found that only 38% of Medicare FFS beneficiaries took advantage of this benefit in 2021.3

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3 Data SNAPSHOT January 2023

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Beneficiary Resources

Medicare & You: Medicare’s Preventive Benefits

Medicare & You: High Blood Pressure and Osteoporosis

“Welcome to Medicare” preventive visit

Yearly “wellness” visits

Chronic care management services

Million Hearts

High Blood Pressure & Kidney Disease

Provider Resources

Connected Care: The Chronic Care Management Resource

Merit-based Incentive Payment System (MIPS)

Decision Memo for Ambulatory Blood Pressure Monitoring (ABPM) (CAG-00067R2)

Hypertension Control Change Package for Clinicians

Hypertension Resources for Health Professionals

Hypertension – American Medical Association

References/Sources


CMS Office of Minority Health

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