

# Memorandum

To: Gold Coast Health Plan Primary Care Providers

From: Kim Timmerman MHA, CPHQ, Director of Quality Improvement  
Nancy Wharfield, M.D., Chief Medical Officer

Re: **American Heart Month**

Date: February 21, 2019

Heart disease is occurring more often in young adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The conditions that lead to heart disease, such as high blood pressure and obesity, are becoming more prevalent at younger ages. During American Heart Month, which takes place in February, you have a great opportunity to evaluate your patient population to identify who may be at risk for heart disease and the steps you can take to help them avoid serious illness.

## **Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®) Measure: Controlling Blood Pressure (CBP)**

Gold Coast Health Plan (GCHP) monitors outcomes on controlling blood pressure through the use of measures from the National Committee for Quality Assurance's (NCQA) Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®). The CBP measure looks at the percentage of members who are 18 to 85 years old who have had a diagnosis of hypertension (HTN) and whose BP was adequately controlled (<140/90 mm Hg) during the measurement year.

In evaluating the HEDIS® CBP measure population from 2018 (for measurement year 2017), 12 percent of members diagnosed with hypertension were between the ages of 18 and 39. GCHP performed at the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile for the CBP measure with an overall performance rate of 54 percent compliance, indicating that there were many missed opportunities for evaluating and controlling blood pressure for both older and younger members.

Members diagnosed with high blood pressure should have a blood pressure measurement taken during all health care visits. They should also be evaluated for other risk factors of heart disease, such as high blood cholesterol, smoking, and unhealthy eating habits.

## **American Heart Association (AHA) Guidelines for Blood Pressure Measurement**

During a patient's blood pressure assessment, the AHA emphasizes the following standards of care:

1. Instruct staff to always take a repeat reading if an abnormal BP value is obtained.
2. Encourage the use of proper technique when obtaining BP readings:
  - Ensure the patient's bladder is empty.
  - Do not have a conversation.
  - Support the patient's back and feet.
  - Use the correct cuff size.
  - Place the cuff on the bare arm.
  - Support the arm at heart level.
  - Keep the patient's legs uncrossed.
3. Treat associated cardiovascular risk factors as part of managing hypertension to lower overall cardiovascular risk.
4. Encourage lifestyle changes (e.g., improved diet, exercise, smoking cessation, stress reduction).
5. Initiate appropriate pharmacologic treatment to lower blood pressure.
6. Make sure patients receive at least one annual blood pressure check per year.

The following resources may be helpful in managing your patients who are at-risk for heart disease.

### **CDC Resources**

To better serve young adults who are at-risk for heart disease, the CDC's website has a helpful resource, ["Heart Disease: It Can Happen at Any Age."](#)

### **Additional HEDIS® Resources**

[Click here](#) for the GCHP tip sheet with coding information for the CBP measure *OR* you can go to [www.goldcoasthealthplan.org](http://www.goldcoasthealthplan.org) and click on Providers > Resources > HEDIS® > HEDIS® Measure: Controlling Blood Pressure (CBP).

If you have any questions about the CBP measure, please contact GCHP's Quality Improvement Department at [hedis@goldchp.org](mailto:hedis@goldchp.org).