

MESSAGES FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

As a health care professional, you play a key role in helping patients reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke and lead longer, healthier lives.

- **Focus on the “ABCS” with your patients:**
 - Emphasize that controlling blood pressure and managing cholesterol reduces your patients’ risk of heart attack and stroke.
 - Ask your patients about what makes it hard for them to take their medications and help them find ways to make it easier.
 - Ask your patients about their smoking habits and provide smoking cessation counseling and tools to help current smokers quit.
 - Prescribe appropriate aspirin therapy for those who would benefit from it.
 - Promote heart-healthy habits to your patients, such as regular physical activity and a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - Reduce out-of-pocket costs for smoking cessation, blood pressure and cholesterol medications and services.

- **Use health information technology and quality improvement tools to:**
 - Track and improve ABCS performance.
 - Report on the ABCS-related Cardiovascular Prevention Measures Group in the CMS [Physician Quality Reporting System](#).
 - Use electronic health records with clinical decision support tools and patient registries.

- **Connect with other health care professionals in your community to improve ABCS in your patients:**
 - Support team-based approaches to care to improve coordination and quality of care for patients.
 - Implement innovative care models (patient-centered medical homes, Accountable Care Organizations) that include a focus on the ABCS.
 - Recognize and reward health care providers who address and promote the ABCS in their patients.

- Align provider education and quality improvement initiatives to focus on and improve the ABCS.
- **Decrease health disparities** – use culturally appropriate education materials, patient navigators, community health workers to address barriers to care. Connect at-risk patients with community resources for self-management and resources to address barriers to adherence, addressing any inequities in treatment and diagnosis detected by your registries.

Some of the existing investments in cardiovascular health that can be leveraged include:

- [Physician Quality Reporting System](#)
- [Community Transformation Grants](#)
- [Medicare & Medicaid Electronic Health Records Incentive Programs](#)
- [HITECH Act programs](#) (health information resources, health information exchanges, regional extension centers, Beacons)
- [Patient Centered Medical Home Initiatives](#)
- [Medicare Shared Savings Programs \(Accountable Care Organizations\)](#)
- [CMS Innovation Center Initiatives](#)
- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and CMS [Federally Qualified Health Center \(FQHC\) Advanced Primary Care Project and other FQHC programs](#)
- [Medicare Quality Improvement Organization \(QIO\) Program](#) initiatives, including [cardiac care learning and action networks](#) and support for provider participation in the Physician Quality Reporting System
- [Partnership for Patients](#) programs that address cardiovascular health transitions of care and patient self-management