

# Implementing Heart Health Strategies With Point-of-Care and Population Management

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## *MetaStar connects practices with AHRQ research on cardiac health interventions*

As part of a newly launched 3-state consortium called Healthy Hearts in the Heartland (H3), MetaStar will work with independent primary care practices in southeastern Wisconsin to implement evidence-based strategies to address heart health issues.

In May, H3 was awarded a \$15 million grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ) to support 300 independent clinics and health care centers in Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin as they adopt new strategies to improve cardiovascular health in the population. As part of a national set of similar research projects called EvidenceNOW, H3 will identify best practices and investigate the effectiveness of various quality improvement tools and tactics.

H3's approach will build on research that saw marked increases in the use of aspirin

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Doctor Gold is senior vice president and chief medical officer for MetaStar, Inc. Jody Rothe is Quality Manager at MetaStar and serves as MetaStar's program manager for H3. The H3 consortium includes Northwestern University, CHITREC, Purdue University, PurdueREC, Northern Illinois University, IL-HITREC, local and State Departments of Public Health, American Medical Association, Alliance of Chicago, University of Chicago, Telligen and MetaStar.

and lipid-lowering medication in patients whose providers received electronic reminders prior to their visits as well as providers who performed additional outreach targeted to patients not receiving recommended medications. However, such clinical decision support has not consistently improved blood pressure control, and other strategies are needed to address such issues as improving accuracy of blood pressure measurement in the office, home blood pressure monitoring, and use of community pharmacists for medication management.

All of the strategies H3 will use are advocated by the Million Hearts®, a national initiative to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The project focuses on strategies feasible for small primary care practices in a fiscal environment that is dominated by volume-based, fee-for-service payments. H3 will examine 2 distinct but complementary approaches to improving quality of care and performance for the "ABCS" group of interventions (Table 1). Specifically, using point-of-care (POC) or population management (PM) strategies that have been shown to be successful for each of the individual ABCS strategies, H3 will coach eligible (Table 2) practices as they:

- *Optimize electronic health record (EHR) clinical decision support functionality.* Studies have shown increases in aspirin prescribing between 25.8% and 54.3%

**Table 1.** ABCS

- Aspirin therapy for those who need it.
- Blood pressure control.
- Cholesterol management.
- Smoking cessation.

**Table 2.** Is your practice eligible for H3 coaching?

The H3 consortium will select independent providers in Southeast Wisconsin, Northeast Illinois, and Northern Indiana (including Indianapolis). Clinics are eligible to participate if they:

- Have ≤ 10 providers.
- Are focused on adult primary care.
- Have a certified electronic health record system.
- Do not currently receive significant quality improvement support.
- Practice in Sheboygan, Washington, Ozaukee, Jefferson, Waukesha, Milwaukee, Walworth, Racine, or Kenosha counties.

through the use of clinical reminders at the point of care.

- *Implement and modify office-based protocols.* Coaching will incorporate practices advocated by the Million Hearts initiative.
- *Engage in community efforts to encourage team-based approaches.* For example, studies have shown that providing care in collaboration with pharmacists has greatly reduced systolic blood pressure in hypertensive patients.
- *Collect and analyze clinical quality measures.* This approach aligns with many pay-for-performance models and helps providers to effectively target patient populations.

If your practice is interested in learning more about this program, please contact us at H3@metastar.com.

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