



Cardiology Deserts Community Partner Toolkit

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Cardiology Deserts Campaign Overview

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Despite the prevalence, millions of Americans face an additional, often overlooked risk: they live in communities without adequate access to cardiology care.

Across the country these communities, known as “cardiology deserts,” lack the specialists and resources needed to support heart health. According to research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, as many as 22 million people live in U.S. counties with limited or no access to cardiology care. People of color and those in rural areas face persistent barriers to accessing heart health specialists.

At the same time, gaps in awareness further compound the issue. Many Americans are unfamiliar with key measures of heart health and the importance of routine screenings. In a survey conducted by the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC), one in five respondents said they do not see a heart health specialist because they don’t believe they need to—highlighting a critical disconnect between risk and perceived need.



Together, these gaps in access and awareness contribute to higher rates of heart disease and poorer outcomes in underserved communities.

Why is it important?

The ABC **Cardiology Deserts Campaign** is a nationwide initiative working to close these gaps. The campaign focuses on increasing awareness, improving access to heart health education, and supporting community-based efforts to promote prevention and early detection, particularly in under-resourced areas.

As a trusted leader in your community, ABC recognizes the important role you can play in helping bring this critical work to life. This toolkit is designed to support community partners in activating the Cardiology Deserts Campaign at the local level through education, outreach, and engagement efforts. The resources included can be used across social media, events, and other community touchpoints to help raise awareness, encourage conversations about heart health, and inspire action.

We hope you will use the information and tools provided to help us create meaningful change for the millions of Americans at risk of complications from heart disease.

How to Use this Toolkit

The Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) created this toolkit to help community partners raise awareness about heart health, increase understanding of cardiology deserts, and encourage conversations about access to care in communities across the country.

The materials included in this toolkit are designed to be flexible and easy to use across a variety of outreach efforts, including:

- Community events and health fairs
- Social media campaigns
- Newsletters and email outreach
- Faith-based and community organization programming
- Patient and caregiver education
- Advocacy and policy engagement

We encourage partners to customize the materials to reflect the needs, voice, and priorities of your organization and community. You may add local statistics, event information, community resources, or personal stories where appropriate.

Ways to Use the Toolkit

Community partners are encouraged to:

- Share social media content and graphics through your organization's channels
- Include the newsletter article in community newsletters, websites, or email communications
- Distribute the flyer and fact sheet at events, clinics, community centers, schools, workplaces, and places of worship
- Use the policy letter template to engage local, state, or federal policymakers
- Incorporate materials into presentations, workshops, educational sessions, or outreach campaigns

Linking Back to the Campaign

When sharing campaign materials digitally, please direct audiences to the official Cardiology Deserts Campaign website for additional resources and information: www.cardiologydeserts.org.

You may also tag or reference the ABC when appropriate to help amplify campaign visibility and connect audiences with trusted heart health information.

Use of ABC Name and Logo



Community partners are welcome to use the materials included in this toolkit in support of educational and awareness activities related to the Cardiology Deserts Campaign.

- To help maintain a consistent look and message across campaign materials, we kindly ask partners to:
- Use the ABC logo and branding elements exactly as provided whenever possible
- Avoid using the ABC name or logo in ways that could suggest endorsement of products, services, or political candidates
- Preserve the accuracy of campaign messaging, statistics, and educational information when adapting materials for your community

Template Newsletter Article

The template newsletter article can be customized and shared with your community to raise awareness about heart health and gaps in access to care. Please tailor the content to reflect your organization's voice and include local information where applicable.

Let's Talk About Heart Health and Access to Care

Heart disease affects many families in our community. You may know someone managing high blood pressure, dealing with high cholesterol, or recovering from a heart-related illness. The good news is that many of these conditions can be prevented or managed with the right care and information.

When heart conditions go undetected, they can lead to serious problems like heart attack or stroke. That's why regular checkups and early awareness matter. But for many people, it's not just about making healthy choices; it's about whether care is accessible in the first place.

When Care Isn't Close to Home

According to research published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, as many as 22 million people live in U.S. counties with limited or no access to cardiology care. People of color and those in rural areas face persistent barriers to accessing heart health specialists.

At the same time, awareness is another barrier. In a recent Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) survey, one in five people said they do not see a heart specialist simply because they don't think they need to.

That is why the ABC created the Cardiology Deserts Campaign—to help close these gaps and bring more information and support to communities like ours.

What You Can Do for Your Heart

Taking care of your heart does not have to be complicated—just remember your ABCs!

- A Ask for your key numbers:** Ask a primary care doctor, nurse, or local clinic for your blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index (BMI) numbers.
- B Be aware of what they mean:** Know your numbers and what “in range” means for you.
- C Create a plan:** Commit to heart healthy habits and check in to stay on track.

Small steps can make a big difference. Explore the Association of Black Cardiologists' resources like the [ABCs of Heart Health](#) or [7 Habits to a Healthy Heart](#) for simple, practical tips.

For more resources on heart health, visit www.cardiologydeserts.org.

Template Policy Email/Letter: Advocacy for Heart Health Equity

This template is designed for advocates, organizations, and community members to send to elected officials or policymakers. It can be customized with local data, personal stories, or organizational priorities to support efforts that expand access to cardiovascular care and reduce disparities in heart health outcomes.

Subject: Expanding Access to Heart Health Care in Our Communities

Dear [Title] [Last Name],

Heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Despite advances in prevention and treatment, too many individuals and families still face significant barriers to accessing the care and information they need to protect their heart health.

Across the country, millions of Americans live in areas with limited or no access to cardiology care. These gaps are further compounded by disparities in education, access to preventive screenings, and availability of local healthcare resources. A recent national survey conducted by the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) underscores the urgency of this issue:

- **15% of adults** have never received a cardiovascular screening
- **22% of adults** have tried to see a heart clinician but could not get an appointment
- **1 in 5 adults** do not seek care from a heart specialist because they do not believe they need to

These challenges are particularly pronounced in communities of color, rural areas, and regions facing persistent healthcare workforce shortages.

Closing these gaps requires a coordinated and sustained effort to improve access to care, strengthen preventive education, and support community-based health initiatives. Ensuring that individuals can receive timely screenings, understand their risk, and connect with appropriate clinicians is essential to improving outcomes and saving lives.

The ABC's [Cardiology Deserts Campaign](#) is working to raise awareness of these disparities and connect communities with resources and information. However, meaningful and lasting change will require continued leadership and action at the policy level.

We respectfully encourage your office to prioritize efforts that:

- Expand access to cardiovascular screenings and preventive services
- Support community-based health education and outreach
- Strengthen the healthcare workforce in underserved areas
- Improve access to affordable care and reduce barriers to treatment

Improving heart health outcomes is not only a public health priority, but a critical step toward building healthier, more equitable communities.

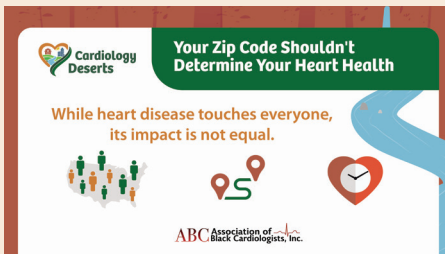
Thank you for your leadership and commitment to the health and well-being of your constituents. We welcome the opportunity to share additional information or collaborate on efforts to address these important challenges.

Sincerely,

[Your Name / Organization]

Template Social Media Content and Graphics

The following template posts can be customized for different social media platforms and tailored to fit your voice. Please note that some character counts may need to be adjusted to meet content limitations specific to each platform.



Heart health shouldn't depend on your zip code.

Millions of Americans live in communities with limited or no access to heart care and education. These areas are known as cardiology deserts.

The Association of Black Cardiologists' Cardiology Deserts Campaign is working to raise awareness of these gaps and connect communities with trusted information and resources.

Learn more and take the first step toward protecting your heart at cardiologydeserts.org.

#HeartHealth #AccessToCare #CardiologyDeserts

[Download Graphic](#)

Access to heart care is not equal.

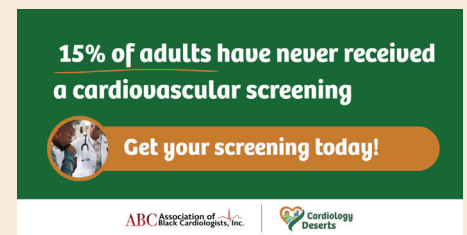
A national survey from the Association of Black Cardiologists found that 15% of adults have never received a cardiovascular screening, including nearly 1 in 5 Black and Hispanic adults.

Everyone deserves the chance to know their risk and protect their heart health.

Learn how the Cardiology Deserts Campaign is raising awareness and helping close these gaps at cardiologydeserts.org.

#HeartHealth #AccessToCare #CardiologyDeserts

[Download Graphic](#)



Only 36% of adults know their cholesterol levels



Do you know your numbers?

ABC Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.

Cardiology Deserts

A survey from the Association of Black Cardiologists found that only 36% of adults know their cholesterol levels, with even lower awareness among Black and Hispanic communities.

When you don't know your numbers, it's harder to know your risk—or take steps to protect your heart.

Learn more and take control of your heart health at cardiologydeserts.org.

#HeartHealth #AccessToCare #CardiologyDeserts

Download Graphic

Small steps can make a big difference for your heart.

Even when access to care is limited, you can act:

A: Ask for your numbers – blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, BMI

B: Be aware of what they mean - Know your numbers and what “in range” means for you.

C: Create a plan - Commit to heart healthy habits and check in to stay on track.

For more simple, practical tips, read the Association of Black Cardiologists' ABCs of Heart Health: <https://abcardio.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/ABCs-of-Heart-Health-Infographic.pdf>

#HeartHealth #AccessToCare #CardiologyDeserts

Download Graphic

The ABCs of Heart Health

A

Ask for
Your Key
Numbers

B

Be Aware
of What
They Mean

C

Create
a Plan

ABC Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.

Cardiology Deserts

Take Care of Your Heart

Heart health matters - to you, your family, and your community

Join us for a community health event
focused on heart health and wellness

ABC Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.

Cardiology Deserts

Join us for a community [conversation/screening event] focused on heart health and wellness.

[EVENT NAME]

[DATE]

[TIME]

[LOCATION]

This event is an opportunity to learn more about heart health, understand your risk, and get connected to resources that support access to care.

For more information, visit: [INSERT LINK]

#HeartHealth #AccessToCare #CardiologyDeserts

Download Graphic

Cardiology Deserts Flyer

Use this flyer to raise awareness about heart health and gaps in access to care in your community. Share it at events, display it in high-traffic spaces, or distribute it through your organization's network.



Take Care of Your Heart

Heart health matters—to you, your family, and your community.

In many neighborhoods, people do not have easy access to heart clinicians or simple, clear information about how to stay healthy. These areas are called **cardiology deserts**, places where it can be hard to get the heart care you need.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in the United States. The good news is that many heart conditions can be prevented or managed when they are found early and when people have access to the right care, support, and information.



Small Steps Can Make a Big Difference for Your Heart

Even when specialty care is not close by, you can take simple steps. As simple as ABCs!

- A Ask for your key numbers:** Ask a primary care doctor, nurse, or local clinic for your blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index (BMI) numbers.
- B Be aware of what they mean:** Know your numbers and what “in range” means for you.
- C Create a plan:** Commit to heart healthy habits and check in to stay on track.

Taking small steps today can help protect your health for the future.

Community Health Event

You are invited to a community [health screening / heart health conversation / wellness event]

[EVENT NAME]

[DATE]

[TIME]

[LOCATION]

At this event, you can:

- Learn more about heart health and risk factors
- Receive basic health screenings (if applicable)
- Connect with local health resources
- Ask questions in a welcoming community setting

LEARN MORE

Visit www.cardiologydeserts.org to learn more about heart health, prevention, and access to care.

Download Flyer

Cardiology Deserts Factsheet

Use this fact sheet to raise awareness about heart health and barriers to care in your community. Share it at events, through community outreach, or across your organization's network.



Heart Health Starts with Awareness and Access

Millions of Americans live in communities with limited access to heart care and heart health education

Insights informed by national heart health data and a survey conducted by the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC)

Many Adults Don't Know Their Heart Health Risk

- **Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death** in the United States, yet many people are unaware of their personal risk factors or warning signs (CDC)
- **Nearly half of all U.S. adults** have some form of cardiovascular disease (AHA)
- **40% of adults** are unaware that there are two types of cholesterol: HDL ("good") and LDL ("bad") (ABC)
- **About 1 in 5 heart attacks are silent**, meaning damage occurs without obvious symptoms (AHA)
- **60% of Black adults have some form of heart disease**, including heart failure, stroke or hypertension (AHA)



For Many Communities, Care Isn't Close to Home

Millions of Americans live in areas known as cardiology deserts, where access to heart specialists and preventive care is limited.

- **25% of adults** must travel **10–20 miles** to see a heart specialist (ABC)
- More than **2 million people** live in counties without a single cardiologist (ABC)

Gaps in access to care and education make it harder for people to understand their risk, get screened, and receive timely care. This can lead to delayed diagnosis and more serious health outcomes.

Protect Your Heart

Taking care of your heart does not have to be complicated. Small steps can make a big difference:

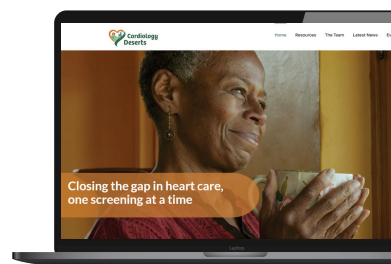
- A Ask for your key numbers:** Ask a primary care doctor, nurse, or local clinic for your blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index (BMI) numbers.
- B Be aware of what they mean:** Know your numbers and what "in range" means for you.
- C Create a plan:** Commit to heart healthy habits and check in to stay on track.

Everyone Deserves Access to Heart Health Information

The ABC Cardiology Deserts Campaign is working to raise awareness about gaps in heart health access and education through community outreach, prevention, and educational resources.

Talk with your clinician to learn more about your heart health and preventive care options.

Visit CardiologyDeserts.org to learn more.



Download Factsheet