



Cardiology Deserts Hospital and Health System 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.

Hospitals and health systems play a critical role in addressing disparities in cardiovascular care and improving outcomes for patients and communities. As trusted healthcare leaders, your organization has the ability to expand awareness, strengthen community engagement, and help connect patients to the care and resources they need. This toolkit is designed to support hospitals and health systems in activating the Cardiology Deserts Campaign at the local level. The resources included can be used across patient education efforts, community outreach initiatives, social media, events, and other engagement opportunities to help raise awareness about heart health, encourage preventive care, and foster meaningful conversations around cardiovascular risk and access to care.

We hope you will use the information and tools provided to help drive 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 hospital and healthcare system 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, screenings, and health fairs
- Patient newsletters and email communications
- Waiting rooms and patient care areas
- Patient and caregiver education

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 patient success stories where appropriate.

Ways to Use the Toolkit

Hospital and healthcare system partners are encouraged to:

- Announce your participation in the Cardiology Deserts Campaign
- Include the newsletter article in patient newsletters or email communications
- Distribute the flyer and fact sheet at events, in waiting rooms, and patient care areas
- Incorporate materials into presentations, workshops, educational sessions, or outreach campaigns
- Use campaign messaging to help spark conversations about heart health equity and access to care

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 Press Release

The template press release can be customized and distributed to announce your organization's participation in the Association of Black Cardiologists' Cardiology Deserts Campaign. Please tailor the content to reflect your organization's voice, leadership, local community priorities, and available heart health resources or services where applicable.

[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME] Joins Association of Black Cardiologists' Cardiology Deserts Campaign to Raise Awareness About Heart Health and Access to Care

[DATELINE] — Today, **[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME]** announced its participation in the Cardiology Deserts Campaign, a nationwide initiative led by The Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) to raise awareness about gaps in access to cardiovascular care and heart health education in communities across the country.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease remains one of the leading causes of death in the United States, yet millions of Americans continue to face barriers to accessing preventive care, cardiovascular screenings, and specialty heart care services. These gaps are especially significant in communities known as “cardiology deserts,” where access to cardiologists and heart health resources may be limited. 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.

“When communities lack the tools to understand their heart health, it’s not just a missed opportunity – it’s a public health crisis,” said Anthony Fletcher, MD, President of the Association of Black Cardiologists. “Hospitals and health systems are trusted partners in helping communities access information, screenings, and care that can support healthier outcomes. Every conversation could be life changing.”

Through participation in the Cardiology Deserts Campaign, **[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME]** is helping to increase awareness about cardiovascular health, encourage preventive care, and connect patients and families with trusted information, screenings, and community resources.

“[INSERT LEADER QUOTE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF HEART HEALTH, PREVENTION, ACCESS TO CARE, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT],” said **[NAME, TITLE]**.

The Cardiology Deserts Campaign focuses on raising awareness, promoting early intervention, and ensuring access to life-saving cardiology care, especially for those in communities of color and rural regions. **[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME]** encourages patients and community members to:

- **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.
- **Be aware of what they mean:** Know your numbers and what “in range” means for you.
- **Create a plan:** Commit to heart healthy habits and check in to stay on track.

To learn more about the Cardiology Deserts Campaign and access heart health resources, visit [CardiologyDeserts.org](https://www.CardiologyDeserts.org).

About **[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME]**

[INSERT ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE]

About the Association of Black Cardiologists

Founded in 1974, the Association of Black Cardiologists (ABC) is a nonprofit organization comprised of cardiologists, healthcare professionals, and community advocates committed to eliminating the disparities that lead to poor cardiovascular outcomes in underserved communities. Membership is open to all, regardless of race, ethnicity, or vocation. ABC promotes health equity through a combination of professional education, patient and community outreach, grassroots advocacy, and science. Learn more at www.abccardio.org.

Template Newsletter Article

The template newsletter article can be customized and shared with patients, caregivers, and community members 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.

Good Heart Health Starts with Awareness, Prevention, and Access to Care

Heart disease affects millions of people and families across the country. The good news is that many heart conditions can be prevented or managed when they are identified early and treated with the right care and support.

Knowing your risk and staying connected to care are important steps in protecting your health. Across the country, many communities have limited or no access to heart specialists and heart health education. These areas are often called “cardiology deserts,” where access to cardiology care and preventive services may be more difficult to find.

At the same time, many people may not realize they are at risk for heart disease or may not know important heart health numbers like blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

[HOSPITAL/HEALTH SYSTEM NAME] is proud to partner with the Association of Black Cardiologists’ [Cardiology Deserts Campaign](#) to help connect patients and families with trusted heart health information and resources.

What You Can Do for Your Heart

Taking care of your heart does not have to be complicated—just know your [ABCs of Heart Health](#)! 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.

Preventive care and early action can help identify risks before they become serious health problems. Routine wellness visits and screenings can help identify risks early. To schedule an appointment, contact [HOSPITAL/HEALTHCARE SYSTEM APPOINTMENT CENTER at WEBSITE/PHONE NUMBER].

To learn more about heart health and the Cardiology Deserts Campaign, visit www.cardiologydeserts.org.

Cardiology Deserts Door Hanger

Use this door hanger in doctor's offices, clinics, waiting rooms, exam rooms, and patient care areas to encourage conversations about heart health, prevention, and access to care.

Protect Your Heart Health

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in the United States — but early action can help protect your health.

**Know Your Numbers.
Know Your Risk.**

Talk to your clinician about:

- Blood pressure screening
- Cholesterol testing
- Your glucose numbers and BMI
- Heart disease risk factors

ABC Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc. | **Cardiology Deserts**

Learn more at CardiologyDeserts.org

[Download Door Hanger](#)

Cardiology Deserts Waiting Room Table Tent Card

Use this waiting room table tent card to help raise awareness about heart health, prevention, and the importance of routine screenings and preventive care. Display these materials in waiting rooms, reception areas, exam rooms, or other patient spaces to encourage conversations between patients and providers about heart health, risk factors, and access to care.



[Download Table Tent](#)

Cardiology Deserts Poster

Use this poster to help raise awareness about heart health, prevention, and gaps in access to care in your community. Display these materials in waiting rooms, hallways, exam rooms, community spaces, or other high-traffic areas to encourage patients and visitors to learn their risk factors, stay up to date on preventive screenings, and talk with a clinician about their heart health.

ABC Association of
Black Cardiologists, Inc.



Your Heart Health Matters

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

Heart disease is common, but many people are at risk without knowing it. In communities known as “**cardiology deserts**,” access to heart care, screenings, and heart health resources can be limited.

Understanding your risk and talking to a clinician are important steps in protecting your heart health.



Ask Your Clinician About:

- ✓ Blood pressure screening
- ✓ Cholesterol testing
- ✓ Your glucose numbers and BMI
- ✓ Heart disease risk factors
- ✓ Preventive care and healthy habits

Know Your Numbers. Know Your Risk.

Understanding your cholesterol levels and other heart health indicators is essential to preventing serious complications. Awareness is the first step toward prevention.

LEARN MORE

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

Download Poster

Cardiology Deserts Factsheet

Use this factsheet to help educate patients and community members about heart health, prevention, and gaps in access to cardiovascular care. These materials can be shared in waiting rooms, exam rooms, community outreach settings, health education events, or other patient-facing environments to encourage conversations about heart health risk factors, preventive screenings, and the importance of staying connected to care.



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:

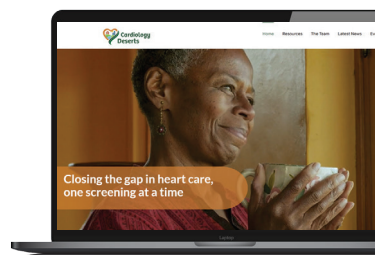
- A Ask for your key numbers:** Ask a primary care doctor, nurse, or local clinic for your blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, and body mass index (BMI) numbers.
- B Be aware of what they mean:** Know your numbers and what "in range" means for you.
- C Create a plan:** Commit to heart healthy habits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