



Video Transcript: Tackling Hypertension through Reproductive Health Care in Kachemak Bay: A Case Study

Speaker 1 (00:00): Tackling Hypertension through Reproductive Health Care in Kachemak Bay: A Case Study. This video was developed by the Reproductive Health National Training Center, RHNTC. The Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic is located on the Kenai Peninsula in beautiful Homer, Alaska. With technical assistance from the RHNTC, the Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic used the Hypertension Prevention and Control Improvement Toolkit to integrate best practices for hypertension prevention, diagnosis, and control in a reproductive health care setting.

Hypertension is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, but it is often preventable.

Description Narrator (00:40): Robin Holmes, MD. Medical Director, Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic.

Robin Holmes (00:45): Heart attacks and strokes are the number one killer of Americans. That's not very sexy to think about, but it's true. And it's because of the lives we're leading from a young age. So, catching people early is important.

Speaker 1 (00:58): Hypertension is one of the leading and most preventable contributors to maternal morbidity and mortality. And Native American, Alaska Native and Black women are more likely to die of hypertensive disorders of pregnancy. They are also disproportionately affected by stressors such as racism, poverty, and gender discrimination.

Robin Holmes (01:18): Everyone at the clinic agreed that this was a great opportunity to catch hypertension before it is seen in pregnancy.

Speaker 1 (01:27): Hypertension is also on the rise in young people, driven primarily by increases in weight and decreases in physical activity.

Description Narrator (01:35): Sonja Martin Young, Certified Nurse Midwife, Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic.

Sonja Martin Young (01:40): I feel like we're seeing more folks with hypertension that are younger. People that you wouldn't necessarily expect. Like you don't walk through the door and you think to yourself, oh, this person might have a problem.

Speaker 1 (01:52): Reproductive health providers are uniquely positioned to disrupt this epidemic.

Description Narrator (01:56): Angie Balsarini, Clinic Manager, Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic.

Angie Balsarini (02:01): As family planning clinics, we are best positioned to be the people who are screening for this, because we're going to be like first point of contact with a lot of people who otherwise wouldn't be able to get these resources.

Speaker 1 (02:18): Although providers often refer clients for additional services, studies show that very few of those clients follow through with the referral appointment.

Robin Holmes (02:26): I think more and more it's starting to be recognized that "go to your primary care provider" isn't a reliable option that we need to be addressing this where and when we see it, because it affects so many people in our country.

Speaker 1 (02:43): To tackle hypertension, the Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic started with assessment.

Angie Balsarini (02:48): We did the kind of initial assessment of what we were doing, and what we realized from looking at the data from that assessment was that we actually weren't doing a whole lot.

Description Narrator (02:59): A group photo of the Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic staff.

Speaker 1 (03:03): Through a collaborative process that involved the entire staff, Kachemak Bay used what they learned from the assessment to develop a plan to increase staff understanding of the importance of hypertension and its impact on health outcomes.

Angie Balsarini (03:16): The awareness is like the hugest part of what we've learned. Really. Like, that this is a need.

Speaker 1 (03:25): They offered training and decision-support tools to staff and clinical services providers to increase their comfort providing blood pressure services.

Sonja Martin Young (03:34): I used to pay a lot of attention to those really high blood pressures, but not so much those creeping up kind of blood pressures that can be a little bit concerning, but they don't necessarily trigger that alarm to kind of go off. And so that's been a big change for me since we've been doing this, is really starting to pay attention to the some of those other blood pressures.

Speaker 1 (03:54): The Kachemak Bay team also worked to improve their processes for blood pressure management, follow-up, and referrals.

Description Narrator (04:01): Jane Rohr, Client Services Coordinator, Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic.

Jane Rohr (04:06): Now I'm keeping more of an eye out for those telephone encounters from providers about follow-up, and I'm also taking the blood pressure follow-up seriously.

Speaker 1 (04:16): And they made sure they were universally applying a trauma-informed approach.

Description Narrator (04:20): The Clinic's Safe Zone sign sits on a windowsill. The sign reads: This space RESPECTS all aspects of people including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, age, religion, and ability.

Jane Rohr (04:35): It's really important for us to bring blood pressure checks into the appointment in a trauma-informed way, such as asking a client for consent before touching them to put that cuff on their arm, because trauma informed care is at the center of what we do and taking blood pressure is often done at the beginning of an appointment. And so, you can set the tone for how that goes for the rest of your appointment.

Speaker 1 (04:59): Hypertension prevention, diagnosis, and management can have profound impacts on maternal health and health across the lifespan.

Robin Holmes (05:06): What I want other clinics to know about our experience here is that we are very small and very limited in our resources. The materials that we were provided with were very straightforward and very easy to use.

Description Narrator (05:21): RHNTC's 8 Steps to Accurately Measure Blood Pressure (BP) at Home guide, and other Blood Pressure screening and management literature.

Robin Holmes (05:29): Being able to just have something that was sort of plug and go was very reassuring and comforting, and I really hope that other people take this as a tool to see if their patient population might benefit from a similar initiative.

Speaker 1 (05:45): For more information and to access the Hypertension Prevention and Control Toolkit, visit RHNTC.org.

Description Narrator (05:53): RHNTC logo, Reproductive Health National Training Center.