

Cardiovascular disease, primarily heart disease and stroke, causes more deaths in Americans of both genders and all racial and ethnic groups than any other disease.¹



CLOSE THE GAP



What is the Gap?



Why do we focus on disparities in cardiovascular health care?

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the #1 killer of American women, blacks and Latinos.²
- By the year 2050, people from minority populations are expected to represent nearly 50% of the U.S. population.³
- Even with insurance and of the same social class, minorities often receive a lower quality of care than their white counterparts.³
- While some progress has been made in primary care, recent studies suggest that little progress has been made in addressing racial and ethnic disparities in cardiovascular care.³

A closer look

- More women than men die of heart disease, although more men have heart attacks.¹⁰
- In 2005, cardiovascular disease claimed about one death per minute among females; that is more female lives than claimed by cancer, chronic lower respiratory diseases, Alzheimer's disease, accidents and diabetes combined.²
- Black Americans are more likely to have heart failure symptoms at an earlier age, have their heart failure get worse faster, have more hospital visits and die from heart failure.⁵
- 40% of all black Americans living in the U.S. have high blood pressure.⁵
- It is estimated that one out of every four Latino males – and one of every three Latino females – will die from heart disease and stroke.⁶
- 10.4% of Hispanics/Latino Americans ages 20 years or older have diagnosed diabetes.⁹
- Of athletes who died suddenly with an enlarged heart, 55% were black Americans compared to 41% white athletes.⁸

In spite of current guidelines and indications for therapy, women and black patients were significantly less likely than white men to receive ICD therapy, independent of other characteristics.⁷

How can you help?

This initiative serves to increase attention on an issue that is sensitive and difficult to address. Increasing awareness of a problem is the first step in the process of change.

As a healthcare professional:

- Get to know the evidence.
- Review your own practice and procedures to ensure that existing cardiac care guidelines are being followed.
- Increase your medical staff and referral network's awareness of CVD disparities.
- Get involved with Close the Gap community efforts

What is Close the Gap?

Close the Gap is an educational initiative, sponsored by Boston Scientific, aimed at addressing disparities in cardiovascular care for the underserved patient populations of women, black Americans, and Latino Americans.

In 2006, a team of health care professionals from across the United States came together and developed the Close the Gap initiative. They identified opportunities and developed strategies to address disparities in cardiovascular care for these underserved populations

Our mission: to help everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, have access to the highest quality cardiovascular care.

Close the Gap focuses on three areas:

Community education	By increasing awareness of cardiovascular risk factors through community programs, more patients can be identified and helped.
Patient values	By helping health care providers learn about disparities, cultural beliefs and barriers to acceptance, more patients will understand the value of cardiovascular therapies.
Advocating for quality measures	By reviewing and influencing medical guidelines, health care providers can help ensure that proven, effective cardiac therapies are offered to all patients who need them.

Every 37 seconds, an American dies of heart disease.²

As a community leader:

- Adopt an ongoing commitment to health and well-being and encourage the same in your community.
- Desire to positively impact cardiovascular health outcomes for your associates and customers

Talk to a Boston Scientific representative, or your Close the Gap team member, to discuss other ways to get involved.

To request information about events and educational resources to share with others in your community or to learn more about improving access to advanced cardiovascular therapies, send an email to closethegap@bsci.com.

Close the Gap: Making a Difference



Collaboration between health care professionals, business leaders, athletic coaches, faith-based leaders and BSC sales teams can educate the community through focused events.

- **Dallas, Texas:** Sixty women were screened for blood pressure, ECG, and ankle brachial index; up to 30% of those tested were identified as needing further evaluation.
- **Minneapolis, Minnesota:** Coach Jen Gillom (Minnesota Lynx) created a public service announcement about cardiovascular risk factor awareness that runs during home games.
- **Jonesboro, Arkansas:** A program at the college screened more than 200 athletes and provided each athlete with an ECG.
- **Richmond, Virginia:** More than one hundred health ministers trained on cardiovascular risk factors went on to train parishioners in over 30 churches in the area.
- **Houston, Texas:** Nearly 5000 congregates listened as a physician presented the prevalence of cardiovascular disease and ways to bring about lifestyle changes, with information, patient success stories and opportunities to talk to the physician after services.
- **Atlanta, Georgia:** Working with faith based leaders across Atlanta to educate people regarding heart health disparities and their risk factors.

For more information on Close the Gap, please visit:
www.bostonscientific.com/closethegap

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