



# MOUNTAIN PEOPLE'S HEALTH COUNCIL HYPERTENSION CHALLENGE CHAMPION SUCCESS STORY

## Million Hearts® in Action

[ Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts® Goals ]



Members of rural populations— which make up 15% of the United States —are at greater risk of dying from heart disease. High blood pressure, smoking, and obesity are more common among rural residents. One health council servicing rural East Tennessee significantly increased blood pressure control in a county of 22,000 with more than 26 percent of that population living under the poverty level and was recognized as Hypertension Control Champion. The Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champions are clinicians, practices, and health systems that have successfully completed the [Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Challenge](#). The Challenge is an opportunity for clinicians, practices, and health systems to demonstrate excellence in hypertension control. Hypertension Control Champions must reach 80% control rates among their hypertensive patients.

**“This provided a personal connection for many patients, giving them a name and face behind the educational materials about the dangers of hypertension that the Council had been sharing.”**

- Trish Hughett Dyer, Chief Operations Officer  
at Mountain Peoples Health Councils



## [ Scott County Demographics ]

- Major Cities in Scott County, Tennessee
  - Helenwood (population: 3,678)
  - Huntsville (population: 2,803)
  - Pioneer (population: 2,701)
  - Robbins (population: 2,551)
  - Winfield (population: 2,002)
  - Elgin (population: 138)
- Land Area: 8,489 square miles
- Household Income: \$28,401
- % of Population under Poverty Level: 26.2%
- High School Grads: 75% of population
- Holders of Bachelor's Degrees: 10% of population
- Unemployment Rate: 3.6% (prior to late 2016 was as high as 20% and ranked #1 for unemployment over multiple years)
- Total Population: 21,989 (2017)

## [ What They Did ]

*Team based approach.* The Mountain People's Health Council operates five Federally Qualified Health Centers for Scott County, located in East Tennessee along the Kentucky border. The county has a population of nearly 22,000 and these five centers see close to 11,000 patients a year - or nearly half the county.

Total Patients served 2018 UDS	10544
HTN Patients	3465 (32.86% of population)
Controlled Hypertension 2018 UDS	3145 (90.67% of HTN patients)

In 2014, Patricia Dyer arrived in East Tennessee and became the Health Council's Chief Operating Officer and as a cardiac nurse she soon focused her attention on the 74 percent controlled hypertension Uniform Data System (UDS) stat. She knew Million Hearts® had the strategies and resources to challenge everyone to improve this number.

Their strategy of care was heavily team-based, wherein the council provided training on blood pressure monitoring, each provider provided treatment plans upon diagnosis and every team member was actively engaged in patient contact and call backs. Additionally, providers had a high level of buy in due to the transparency of data shared among the clinics.

## [ What They Accomplished ]

*A 90% controlled rate.* Nearly one third of the patients seen in Mountain People's Health Council clinics in 2018 were diagnosed with hypertension. By 2018, the team had increased their control rate from 74% to nearly 91%. Trish Dyer spoke of the personal connections that were at the heart of their successes. First, there was a personal loss in their tight-knit rural community - a popular soccer coach in town passed away of a widow-maker heart attack in his early fifties. This provided a personal connection for many patients, giving them a name and face behind the educational materials about the dangers of hypertension that the Council had been sharing. Throughout the strategy of care for hypertension control, Ms. Dyer focused on a team-based approach, sharing data regularly among providers and focusing on timely follow up with patients, allowing for providers to see that "every number is a person, is a family that's touched."

## [ What They Learned ]

*Connecting and leading.* As the team at the Mountain People's Health Council reflected on their success with blood pressure control and discussed their recognition as a Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Champion with former Surgeon General Regina Benjamin during the National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention mid-year meeting, Trish Dyer felt they learned that their transparency of data had sparked a bit of competitiveness with both patients and providers to improve the numbers and then connecting at a personal level was a successful mix. Dr. Benjamin also highlighted that Ms. Dyer's strong leadership was important to their success as well, and challenged us all to support and thank the leaders on your team and in your community working on Million Hearts® goals.

This story is based on information shared at the [National Forum for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention's mid-year meeting; to learn more and for a transcript of the full interview, visit their meeting archives.](#)

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