

## Editor-in-chief's message



Dear Colleagues,

February is American Heart Month. It is also the 10th anniversary of the launch of the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women campaign to reduce gender disparities by increasing awareness about heart disease in women. Although awareness has increased, heart disease remains the No. 1 killer of women in the United States. In fact, the American Heart Association reports that heart disease kills more women than do all forms of cancer combined.

Million Hearts®, led by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is a public-private sector initiative whose goal is to prevent 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. The community- and clinical-level strategies of the initiative seek to empower Americans to make healthy choices to prevent heart attacks and strokes and to improve care for people who need treatment to lower their heart attack and stroke risk.

Million Hearts® encourages healthcare practitioners to focus on the **ABCS** of prevention—**A**spirin when appropriate, **B**lood pressure control, **C**holesterol management, and **S**moking cessation. Women's health nurse practitioners and other advanced practice nurses who see women every day in their clinical practice can have a tremendous impact on women's cardiovascular health by making sure that they address the ABCS of prevention with their patients. Empowering women to lead healthy lifestyles through patient-centered, evidence-based education and preventive health strategies is what we do every day.

NPWH has signed on to the Million Hearts® initiative as a partner along with a number of other key national health associations. These associations include the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, the American Heart Association, the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, and the American Pharmacists Association.

As a Million Hearts® initiative partner, NPWH will publish at least one journal article on cardiovascular health for women in the next year, include cardiovascular health in women as a 2014 conference topic, and let nurse practitioners know via these venues about the Million Heart® ABCS of heart disease prevention. We will also provide a link to the Million Hearts® webpage on our [NPWH website](#) to raise visibility of the initiative for nurse practitioners who provide healthcare for women.

I hope you all will take the time to visit <http://millionhearts.hhs.gov> to learn more about the target improvements and specific strategies to reach the goal of preventing 1 million heart attacks and strokes by 2017. Take the pledge to join the initiative as an individual healthcare practitioner. Look at your own practice data and consider how you can improve performance in the ABCS indicators. Engage all of the healthcare team members in your clinical practice to improve their behavior-change counseling skills. Continue to advocate for policies that provide access to preventive healthcare services that will match with increased availability of preventive health insurance coverage.

Together, we can prevent heart disease in women.

*Beth Kelsey*

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