

“Release the Pressure” Campaign Promotes Heart Health Among Black Women

The American Medical Association campaign amplifies heart healthy messaging to improve blood pressure, increase education and more.

July 15, 2025 By Laura Schmidt

More than 74,000 people have signed the American Medical Association’s (AMA) [Release the Pressure \(RTP\) pledge](#), designed to bring together Black adults across America and encourage preventive action to protect their [heart health](#), according to a [panel discussion](#) at the 2025 AMA Annual Meeting in Chicago.

About [55% of Black adults](#) have [hypertension](#), or high blood pressure, and nearly 80% of them do not have the condition under control, putting them at risk for other health issues, such as heart attack and stroke, according to an [AMA news release](#).

The RTP pledge addresses uncontrolled [high blood pressure](#) and overall cardiovascular health among Black women, who have higher rates of hypertension compared with non-Hispanic white women.

In fact, approximately 58% of U.S. Black women have hypertension, according to the [American Heart Association](#); what’s more, they are more likely to develop it at younger ages.

“Approximately one in two Black women age 20 and older has some form of cardiovascular disease,” said panel moderator Yolanda Lawson, MD, at the meeting. “And yet—despite this high burden—they’re less likely to have their blood pressure under control and more likely to experience complications from unmanaged hypertension, including maternal morbidity and mortality.”

Panelists also highlighted that hypertension often isn’t diagnosed in Black women until [pregnancy](#),

which can increase the risk for complications.

“When we’re talking about pregnancy and [cardiovascular disease](#), oftentimes that’s when the conversation starts, because many times [people]—especially people of color—are not getting the well-visit exams that we should all be getting,” said California Surgeon General Diana Ramos, MD, MPH, a panelist and AMA member.

The campaign is led by the RTP Coalition, which includes the AMA, the AMA Foundation, American Heart Association, Association of Black Cardiologists, Minority Health Institute and the National Medical Association. Together, these groups aim to promote knowledge, resources and opportunities to achieve optimal health and health equity.

“We are looking for different ways of providing the information to increase awareness and educate, because once you are aware, then you can take action,” Ramos said.

The campaign also emphasizes community outreach to connect individuals to these resources and help develop patient-physician trust.

“As an organization, we reaffirmed our commitment to this work last year as part of the [2024-2025 AMA Organizational Strategic Plan to Advance Health Equity](#),” said AMA president Bobby Mukkamala, MD. “And we do this for one simple reason: We need to work to close the gaps in the health of our country.”

The AMA has created tools to help manage blood pressure, including information on what [blood pressure numbers mean](#) to resources for [healthy cooking, physical activity and meditation](#).

To take the pledge to prioritize heart health, [click here](#).