HEALTH AWARENESS

Hispanics Largely Unaware Of Their High Blood Pressure, Despite Risk Factors

(NAPSA)—Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States, currently comprising 14 percent of the total population. By 2050, this number is expected to increase to nearly 25 percent. As a result, the access to and quality of care for Hispanics will become increasingly important as this community continues to grow.

Hypertension, also referred to as high blood pressure, is a major risk factor for heart disease, the leading cause of death in Hispanics. Uncontrolled high blood pressure can eventually lead to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure. Despite the seriousness, Hispanics tend to have a lower awareness of their hypertension, are less likely to be treated with medication for the condition, and have lower blood pressure control compared with African Americans and Caucasians. Furthermore, Hispanics have higher rates of diabetes and obesity compared with Caucasians, additional risk factors for developing hypertension.

"Hypertension often has no warning signs or symptoms, and many people don't realize they have it, so it's important for people, especially those at increased risk, to visit their doctor and get their blood pressure checked regularly," explains Henry Punzi, M.D., clinical assistant professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas.

Steps you can take to control high blood pressure can help you save your own life.

The good news is there are steps you can take to prevent high blood pressure or to treat it if it is already high. A healthy, low-fat, low-sodium diet including several servings of fruits and vegetables can not only help keep your blood pressure down but can reduce the risk of diabetes and obesity. Exercising, quitting smoking and limiting alcohol use can also help lower blood pressure.

If changes in lifestyle and behavior do not work, talk to your doctor about available medications, such as beta blockers, which are an important option in the treatment of hypertension. In fact, results from a recent medical study of Hispanics with hypertension found Bystolic (nebivolol), a beta blocker, achieved double-digit reductions in blood pressure with a low incidence of side effects. For more information, talk to your doctor or visit www.Bystolic.com.