

Disparities in Blood Pressure Control

A Healthy Metric 2022 Brief Report for Wisconsin



Healthy Metric

Advancing Health Equity in Wisconsin

Report Goal

Our goal is to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disparities in blood pressure control in Wisconsin by rural and urban groups.

About Healthy Metric

Healthy Metric is a partnership between UW-Madison, the Medical College of Wisconsin, Marshfield Clinic Research Institute, the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality, and the Wisconsin Health Information Organization that aims to eliminate health disparities in Wisconsin through collaboration, measurement, and interventions.

About the Measure

Blood pressure control: The percentage of hypertension patients, aged 18-85, whose blood pressure was in control during the one-year measurement period. This measure is endorsed by the Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality (WCHQ).

Measure Goal

Highest possible rates of blood pressure control.

Data



Data includes individuals who received health care services from a Wisconsin Collaborative for Healthcare Quality member health system/clinic in 2019 or 2020.

Funders



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Contact

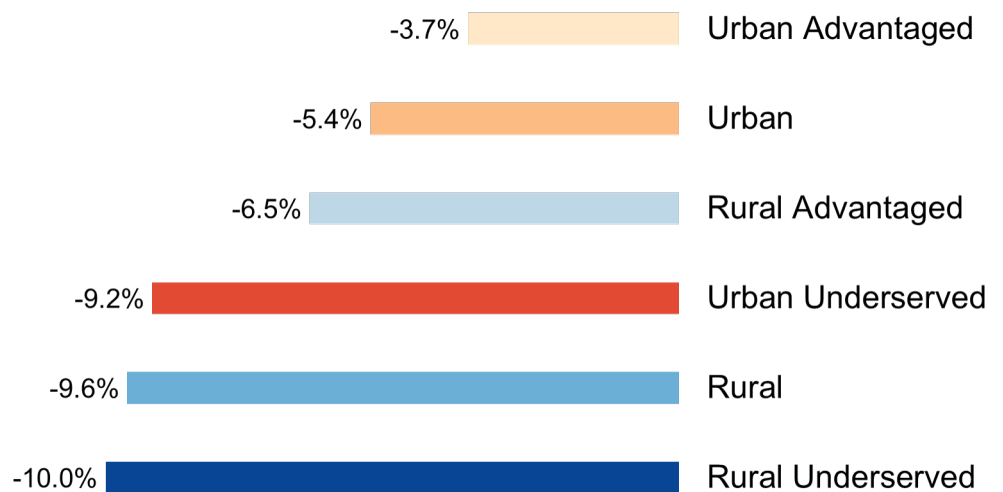
For more information about Healthy Metric, visit: www.healthymetric.org

Executive Summary

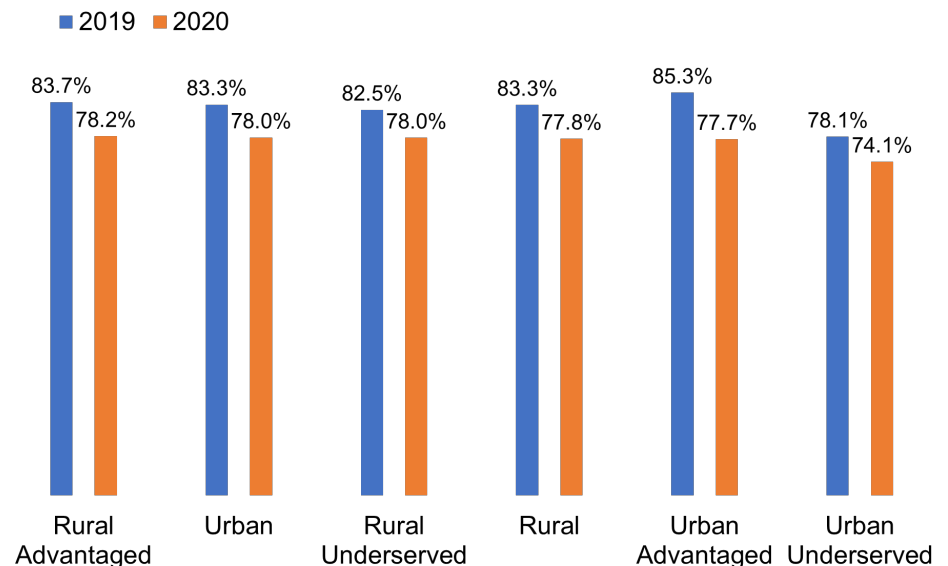
Substantially fewer patients with high blood pressure were seen in primary care clinics during the COVID-19 pandemic, and blood pressure control decreased for all patients.

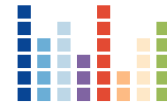
- Primary care visits declined substantially for patients in rural, rural underserved, and urban underserved areas. Compared to 2019, in 2020 there were 30,000 more Wisconsinites with hypertension who did not receive primary care.
- Blood pressure control decreased for all rural and urban groups from 2019 to 2020.

Change in Primary Care Visits for Patients with Hypertension from 2019 to 2020



Blood Pressure Control for Patients with Hypertension





Background

Uncontrolled high blood pressure increases the risk for major cardiovascular disease events, such as heart disease, stroke, and heart failure. In Wisconsin, over 30% of the population has high blood pressure; of those, only half have it in control. According to the Centers for Disease Control, heart disease is the leading cause of death in Wisconsin. Blood pressure control worsened nationally with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Access to Care: Primary Care Visits Drop

The pandemic created several barriers to patients accessing care, perhaps none more hindering than the closure of some clinics across Wisconsin for extended periods of time. While health systems pivoted to telehealth quickly, not all patients had equal access to this service. Because of that and other factors including transportation issues, personal concerns for safety outside of the home, and historical barriers, the number of patients that were seen in primary care clinics for the treatment and ongoing care of hypertension dropped.

Health Disparities Indicators

For this report, health disparities were defined as differences in health outcomes and care measures adversely affecting populations seen in primary care settings. The COVID-19 pandemic had a substantial impact on blood pressure control in Wisconsin and disparities were most substantial when comparisons were made for rural and urban groups. In this report, six groups of rural and urban Wisconsinites were used to capture the unique health-related characteristics of rural and urban areas. More information on how the rural and urban groups were developed is available in the [2020 Wisconsin Health Disparities report: Rural and Urban Populations](#). The disparities presented may be linked to the social determinants of health and unequal distribution of power and resources.

Taking Action

Resources for Taking Action to Reduce Disparities

- [Toolkit for Improving Chronic Conditions, Hypertension & Diabetes: Care & Outcomes](#)
- [What Works for Health: Blood Pressure Control](#)
- [The Community Guide: Blood Pressure Control](#)

Questions to Consider for Taking Action

- How can we address barriers to accessing quality, affordable healthcare?
- What barriers were worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What factors shape people's access to nutritious food, safe places to exercise, and medications?

About the Funders

Advancing A Healthier Wisconsin Endowment (AHW): Driven by a vision for a healthier Wisconsin, the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment reaches statewide, propelling the most promising work and ideas to build a healthier Wisconsin for generations to come.

Wisconsin Partnership Program (WPP): WPP represents a far-reaching commitment by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health to greatly improve the health of people in Wisconsin for years to come.

Healthy Metric is a partnership between:

