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## **AMA, National Coalition Announce Campaign with ESSENCE to Advocate for Heart Health with Black Women**

*Together, AMA, AMA Foundation, Association of Black Cardiologists, American Heart Association, Minority Health Institute, and National Medical Association launch “Release the Pressure” campaign aimed at supporting Black women and their squads to monitor and manage their blood pressure*

CHICAGO – The American Medical Association (AMA), along with a coalition of national physician organizations and heart health experts, today announced a new campaign with ESSENCE aimed at partnering with Black women to improve their heart health and be part of a movement for healthy blood pressure—the leading risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Together, the AMA, the AMA Foundation, Association of Black Cardiologists, American Heart Association, Minority Health Institute and National Medical Association launched the “Release the Pressure” campaign to provide Black women with resources to identify and track their blood pressure numbers, as well as develop a wellness plan with existing personal support systems of family and friends to manage their heart health virtually.

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent coverage of on-going verbal and physical violence against Black people has increased the visibility of long-standing inequities, including historical structural inequities such as neighborhood disinvestment, which has led to less healthy and affordable housing, as well as barriers to consistent transportation, health care access, and employment opportunities—contributing to chronic stress and “weathering” that have made Black communities more vulnerable to illness.

Prior to the pandemic, the latest data showed that high blood pressure continues to disproportionately affect communities of color. According to the American Heart Association, the prevalence of high blood pressure among Black adults in the U.S. is among the highest in the world, with the prevalence of high blood pressure in Black women nearly 40% higher than white women in the U.S. Additionally, almost 80% of Black adults living with high blood pressure do not have it controlled to goal, placing them at increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

However, being Black is not the risk factor for poor health. In fact, there are larger structural and social drivers for these health inequities. That’s why the AMA and the coalition are collaborating with ESSENCE—the leading media, technology and commerce company serving Black women and communities for 50 years. As a trusted brand among Black women and their families, the AMA partnered with ESSENCE to meet a common goal of supporting health and wellness with health care providers and loved ones.

“We have the opportunity to collectively improve our health and we know that preventive care is vital to breaking the devastating impact of high blood pressure within the Black community,” said AMA President Patrice A. Harris, M.D. M.A. “By joining forces with national physician organizations, heart health experts and ESSENCE, we will partner with thousands of Black women, sharing resources that are important to understand their blood pressure numbers and take action to manage their blood pressure. Combining our collective efforts, we strive to improve health outcomes within the Black community.”

Through the Release the Pressure campaign, the AMA and this coalition of national health care organizations are supporting Black women and encouraging them to take a pledge to be part of a healthy blood pressure movement at [ESSENCE.com/ReleaseThePressure](https://www.ama-assn.org/pressroom/2020/04/ama-essence-release-the-pressure). Specifically, the pledge encourages Black women to take the following four steps:

1. **Set a blood pressure goal with your health care professional**—Schedule an appointment with your physician or other health care professional, in-person or virtually, to understand your blood pressure numbers and know your goal for optimal blood pressure.
2. **Monitor blood pressure numbers at home**—Once you learn your blood pressure numbers, take and keep regular records of your blood pressure.
3. **Activate a personalized wellness plan**—Identify specific goals for fitness and heart healthy eating and connect virtually with family members and friends from your “squad” to keep you on track.
4. **Make regular check-ins with your “squad”**—Lean on your family and friends to help you achieve your heart health goals by checking in with them on a daily basis.

The campaign will be featured in the May/June issue of the magazine as well as during upcoming virtual town hall and podcast discussions hosted by ESSENCE and the coalition. During the year-long campaign, the AMA and its coalition collaborators will continue working together with ESSENCE to disseminate additional resources to partner with Black women to take preventive action to protect their heart health and be part of a healthy blood pressure movement. The organizations have a shared goal of engaging more than 300,000 Black women by 2021.

The AMA is committed to [improving the health of the nation](#) by leading the charge to prevent and reduce the burden of chronic diseases, like cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. The AMA will continue its efforts aimed at helping all American adults meet their blood pressure goals to ensure patients live richer and fuller lives.

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### **About the AMA**

The American Medical Association is the physicians' powerful ally in patient care. As the only medical association that convenes 190+ state and specialty medical societies and other critical stakeholders, the AMA represents physicians with a unified voice to all key players in health care. The AMA leverages its strength by removing the obstacles that interfere with patient care, leading the charge to prevent chronic disease and confront public health crises, and, driving the future of medicine to tackle the biggest challenges in health care. For more information, visit [ama-assn.org](http://ama-assn.org).

### **About the AMA Foundation**

As the philanthropic arm of the world's largest physician organization, the AMA Foundation is uniquely positioned to address several of our country's most pervasive health care challenges. Over the last several years, the AMA Foundation has focused on its core programs dedicated to supporting innovative community organizations serving those underrepresented in medicine, as well as developing future leaders in medicine through our medical education and leadership programs. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded more than \$121 million in grants and scholarships, demonstrating nationwide programmatic excellence. For more information, visit [www.amafoundation.org](http://www.amafoundation.org).

### **About ESSENCE Communications**

Essence Communications, Inc. is the number one media, technology and commerce company dedicated to Black women and communities and inspires a global audience of more than 31 million through diverse storytelling and immersive original content. With a multi-platform presence in publishing, experiential and online, ESSENCE encompasses its signature magazine; digital, video and social platforms; television specials; books; and live events, including Black Women in Music™, Black Women in Hollywood™, Beauty Carnival™ and the ESSENCE Festival of Culture™. Essence Communications is owned by Essence Ventures, an independent Black- owned, consumer technology company merging content, community and commerce to meet the evolving cultural and lifestyle needs of people of color.