



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 7, 2018**

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## **Oklahoma HMO provides tips to control high blood pressure**

*Early prevention can help Oklahomans avoid risk of chronic illnesses*

**OKLAHOMA** – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about one in three adults in the U.S. (about 75 million people) have been diagnosed with hypertension and only about 54 percent of that population have their hypertension under control. GlobalHealth, an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization (HMO), is providing tips to help Oklahomans manage and maintain a healthy blood pressure, which can help lower their risk for hypertension, heart attack, stroke, heart failure, and kidney disease.

“High blood pressure raises your risk for heart disease, which is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States,” said Dr. Wesley Williams, medical director at GlobalHealth. “One of the biggest ways to help control blood pressure is to make simple lifestyle changes. Speak with your primary care physician (PCP) about any changes you wish to pursue and take any medications they prescribe. The more knowledge you have about high blood pressure, the better positioned you’ll be to make decisions about your health regarding the disease.”

This month, GlobalHealth is offering Oklahomans some useful tips to help prevent and control high blood pressure:

**Know the disease.** Hypertension, or high blood pressure, may not have any warning signs or symptoms, and many may not know they have it. Blood pressure is the force of blood pushing against the walls of your arteries, which rises and falls throughout the day. If the pressure stays high for too long, it can damage your heart and lead to health problems, according to the CDC. Hypertension may also harden your arteries as a response to increased pressure on the inner walls. When your arteries are hardened, blood flow is decreased to your heart and heart disease may occur and lead to chest pain, heart failure or heart attack.

**Know your numbers.** You can find out if you have high blood pressure or if you are at risk by measuring your blood pressure with a cuff. Your PCP may ask you to record your blood pressure every day and show them the results. Once you know your numbers, you can work with your PCP to take any necessary steps to manage your blood pressure.

**Limit fat consumption for a well-balanced diet.** By limiting saturated fats and trans fats, Oklahomans can better regulate their blood pressure. Patients who reduce their consumption of these fats, as well as red meat, sodium, sweets and sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, can keep high blood pressure at bay. Additionally, adding fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, and nuts and legumes to their diet can help manage blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association.

**Exercise frequently.** Physical activity not only helps control high blood pressure, but it also helps you manage your weight, strengthen your heart and lower your stress level. The CDC recommends a brisk 10-minute walk, three times a day, five days a week. A healthy weight, a strong heart and general emotional health are all good for your blood pressure.

**Set a weight loss goal.** Being overweight and/or obese puts you at greater risk of developing health problems. A little weight loss can help improve your health and reduce the strain on your heart. Moving often and eating well can help you maintain a healthy weight and contribute to a healthy blood pressure.

**Follow a smoking cessation plan.** If you smoke, your PCP should recommend a cessation program. Smoking can lead to increased health risks – including heart disease and stroke – so kicking this habit could help regulate blood pressure and improve your overall health.

### **About GlobalHealth**

GlobalHealth is changing health insurance in Oklahoma. As an industry leader, GlobalHealth is an Oklahoma-based health maintenance organization covering 44,000 individuals in all 77 Oklahoma counties. Working proactively with each member, GlobalHealth engages a personalized management plan to address their specific needs and ensure the best possible health outcomes. GlobalHealth utilizes cutting edge, predictive data technology as a foundation to deliver improved healthcare as part of its commitment to making health insurance more affordable. Its membership includes state and education employees, federal employees, municipal employees, Medicare Advantage members and private employers. GlobalHealth employs more than 200 associates throughout Oklahoma. To learn more, visit [www.GlobalHealth.com](http://www.GlobalHealth.com).

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