



Mended Hearts Advocacy Priorities 2016

Access to Innovative Cardiovascular Disease Treatments and Devices

There are many factors that limit a cardiovascular patient's ability to access the newest, innovative prescription medications, devices and treatments. Accessing affordable treatments is vital for all Americans, especially for those with chronic, potentially life-threatening conditions, such as cardiovascular disease. Mended Hearts believes and will advocate ensuring that all cardiovascular patients have access to the best treatments and care available.

Medication Adherence/Medication Therapy Management

It is estimated that at least half of all patients do not take their medication as directed. Poor medication adherence has serious consequences to patient health including an increased risk of death, and it results in an annual \$100 billion in medical expenditures. Patients with cardiovascular disease who do not adhere to their prescribed medication regime are four times more likely to be hospitalized and have a 30 percent increased risk of mortality compared to their adherent peers.

Medication Therapy Management is a service provided by pharmacists and other medical providers to help patients get the best benefits from their medications, increase medication adherence and reduce the adverse effects of medication mismanagement. These services are currently provided by Medicare; however, eligibility in some cases are limited to patients with three chronic diseases who take eight medications and spend at least \$3,000 on medications annually.

Mended Hearts will advocate for these eligibility requirements to be lowered to ensure more cardiovascular patients on Medicare qualify for these services, which would improve patient outcomes and medication adherence, and reduce health care costs.

Promote, Ensure Access to, and Expand the Use of Cardiac Rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation is an exercise and education program that helps improve the health and well-being of people who have heart problems. Cardiac rehab helps patients recover more quickly, return to an active lifestyle, and reduces the risk of a future cardiac event. Research shows that cardiac rehab reduces mortality by 50 percent and reduces the likelihood of hospital readmissions by 25 percent. Despite the program's benefits, patients often don't enroll in a cardiac rehab program. It is estimated that among eligible patients, only one in five enroll in a cardiac rehab program. Barriers to enrollment include the lack of referral from a patient's physician, limited or no health care coverage, and the scarcity of programs in rural and medically underserved areas. Mended Hearts will work to promote, ensure access to, and expand the use of cardiac rehabilitation.



Mended *Little* Hearts Advocacy Priorities 2016

Health Disparities in Congenital Heart Disease (CHD)

Health disparities are differences in health that are closely linked with social or economic disadvantage. Health disparities can be connected to race, ethnicity, gender or several other factors, and can stem from disadvantages such as poverty, inadequate health care access and educational inequalities. Racial and ethnic differences in CHD-related mortality exist in the United States. There are a number of factors that contribute to these health disparities including the health of the mother, the management of a child's CHD and access to adequate care.

Mended *Little* Hearts will advocate on behalf of these patients and their families by raising awareness of the health disparities that exist in congenital heart care and promote policies aimed at reducing them.

Encouraging Innovation in Pediatric Devices for the Treatment of Congenital Heart Disease

While some cardiovascular medical devices used in the pediatric population are designed specifically for children, many are borrowed or jury-rigged from adult applications. Although such practice has often been born of necessity given the relative lack of availability of devices designed for pediatric use, it has created a situation where the effectiveness and safety of medical devices used in pediatrics have often gone unstudied, and thus are unknown.

The need for pediatric medical devices and the challenges of developing and evaluating such devices have been studied by the FDA and others. The challenges include the small market size, the need for multiple pediatric sizes in certain cases, the expense of trials, barriers to enrollment of children, ethical complexities and the regulatory approval process. In addition, the potential for children to use devices over the long term means that such devices must be especially long-lasting and safe.

Mended *Little* Hearts believes that eliminating the barriers to the the development of new cardiovascular medical devices for pediatric patients is critical in advancing the care of children born with CHD. We will work with governmental agencies, industry and other strategic partners to look at ways to further encourage their innovation.