

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PLACES BLOOD PRESSURE KIOSKS IN LOCAL HEALTH UNITS TO INCREASE ACCESS AND IMPROVE OUTCOMES

BALA SIMON, MD, DRPH
CLARA CANTER, MPH

Heart disease is the leading cause of death and disability in Arkansas (CDC, 2025). Arkansas ranks No. 1 in the U.S. for the highest heart attack deaths and No. 8 in the nation with the highest stroke deaths (CDC, 2025). Death rates for heart attack and stroke among African Americans and Hispanics are two-to-three times higher than those of Whites. High blood pressure, diagnosed and undiagnosed, is the major risk factor for heart attack and stroke (Psaty, 2021). Arkansas's prevalence of hypertension is 42% compared to 34% nationally (CDC, 2025). The prevalence of hypertension is estimated to increase from 51.2% in 2020 to 61.0% in 2050, and there is a need for multi-pronged interventions to reverse these adverse health outcomes (Maddox, 2024). Many people with elevated blood pressure remain undiagnosed, and those with diagnosed hypertension who do not check their blood pressure regularly are unaware, and their blood pressure remains uncontrolled.

Self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring with clinical support is an evidence-based, recommended strategy for out-of-office blood pressure monitoring to achieve and sustain blood pressure control (Whelton, 2017). The practice of SMBP is not widely prevalent in Arkansas, especially among those who are uninsured or cannot afford a blood pressure cuff even if they have insurance, as the coverage varies. Average blood pressure monitors range from \$40-\$60 in out-of-pocket expenses. Lack of access to a blood pressure self-monitoring device is a major reason for undiagnosed and uncontrolled blood pressure and medication nonadherence. Blood pressure kiosks provide public access to SMBP monitoring for individuals with hypertension who do not have blood pressure cuffs. While

blood pressure kiosks are increasingly placed in stores such as Walmart and Walgreens, they are far and few between in Arkansas, especially in rural areas.

The Arkansas Department of Health is a centralized public health department with at least one Local Health Unit in each of the state's 75 counties, for a total of 94 LHUs across the state serving over 165,000 Arkansans with various clinical public health services. The ADH leveraged Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's public health infrastructure grant funds to place FDA-approved, free-standing Pharma Smart Blood Pressure kiosks (Model PS-1000) in 90 of the 94 LHU waiting rooms across the state (the remaining four LHUs are only open part-time to deliver [WIC] program services to woman, infants, and children; the kiosks are handicap accessible, feature digital health trackers, and are available for use during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.). Users will also benefit from American Heart Association Blood Pressure posters placed beside each kiosk; these posters contain cues and action steps in the event of abnormal readings.

A RedCap survey was administered to LHU administrators to evaluate the perceived importance, observed utilization, and percentage of kiosk users who reported their results to the LHU staff. All LHU



Blood Pressure Kiosk at Perry County Local Health Unit