Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

Many CU Health Plan dentists now check your blood pressure [1]

November 28, 2018 by Employee Services [2]

CU Health Plan members may receive a blood pressure reading during their next dental visit. The reason: A recent CU Health Plan pilot program helped to identify hypertensive patients earlier by offering readings at dental offices.

The program launched at 30 dental offices and screened 1,364 patients from July 2017 to July 2018. Of the total patients screened, six were identified as being in hypertensive crises and referred immediately to their physicians for potentially lifesaving interventions.

An additional 154 patients were identified as either hypertensive 1 or hypertensive 2. Pre-hypertensive symptoms were diagnosed in 415 patients, and the remaining patients had normal blood pressure levels. These encouraging results have persuaded an additional 41 dental providers to offer blood pressure readings, with more offices are expected to follow in the coming months.

CU School of Dental Medicine Professor Dr. Michelle Brichacek lauded the program as a benefit to her patients saying, “The providers in the Dental Faculty Practice are concerned with both our patients’ dental and systemic health. We are pleased to collaborate with the CU Health Plan in screening our patients for hypertension. This blood pressure program benefits patients by allowing dentists to educate them regarding the need for detection and treatment of hypertension.”

Barbara Abrahams, a cardiologist and professor at the CU School of Medicine said, “I am so happy to hear of the successful blood pressure screening program. Truly a ‘silent killer,’ yet generally easy to treat, hypertension can lead to heart attacks, strokes, aneurysms, heart failure, kidney failure, early dementia as well as some forms of vision loss. Early detection is priceless.”

The pilot was designed in partnership with Delta Dental. Depending on the pilot’s final results, blood pressure readings could be offered to Delta Dental members across the country.

CU Health Plans [3], Dental [4], Wellness [5]
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