

BACKGROUND

Black men are disproportionately affected by hypertension and as a result suffer alarmingly high rates of both morbidity and mortality. This disproportionate trend can be difficult to address in traditional healthcare settings in part due to the mistrust of the medical community due to the historical systemic violence of black bodies by the healthcare system. The Cut Hypertension Program (CHP), at Roots Community Health Center (Roots), seeks to address this by using a low-cost, community-based intervention to engage people the healthcare system has historically failed to reach or serve: African American men. Building on successful results of the Los Angeles Barbershop Blood Pressure Study (LA-based randomized trial), we hope to take the next step: to distill the core components of a barbershop-based intervention and create a sustainable, scalable model guided by the expertise of barbers, community partners, and payors to reproduce the results in an equity-centered cost-effective manner.

Roots cultivated a network of barbershops with roots in East Oakland's African ancestry communities to conduct free blood pressure screenings, and provide culturally congruent health coaching by trained barbers, while engaging a hypertension-specialty pharmacist to address cardiovascular health disparities through health counseling, in-shop screenings, labs and initiation/monitoring of anti-hypertensive medications.

OBJECTIVE

To eliminate alarming cardiovascular disparities among African American men by empowering barbers as leaders in their barbershops to:

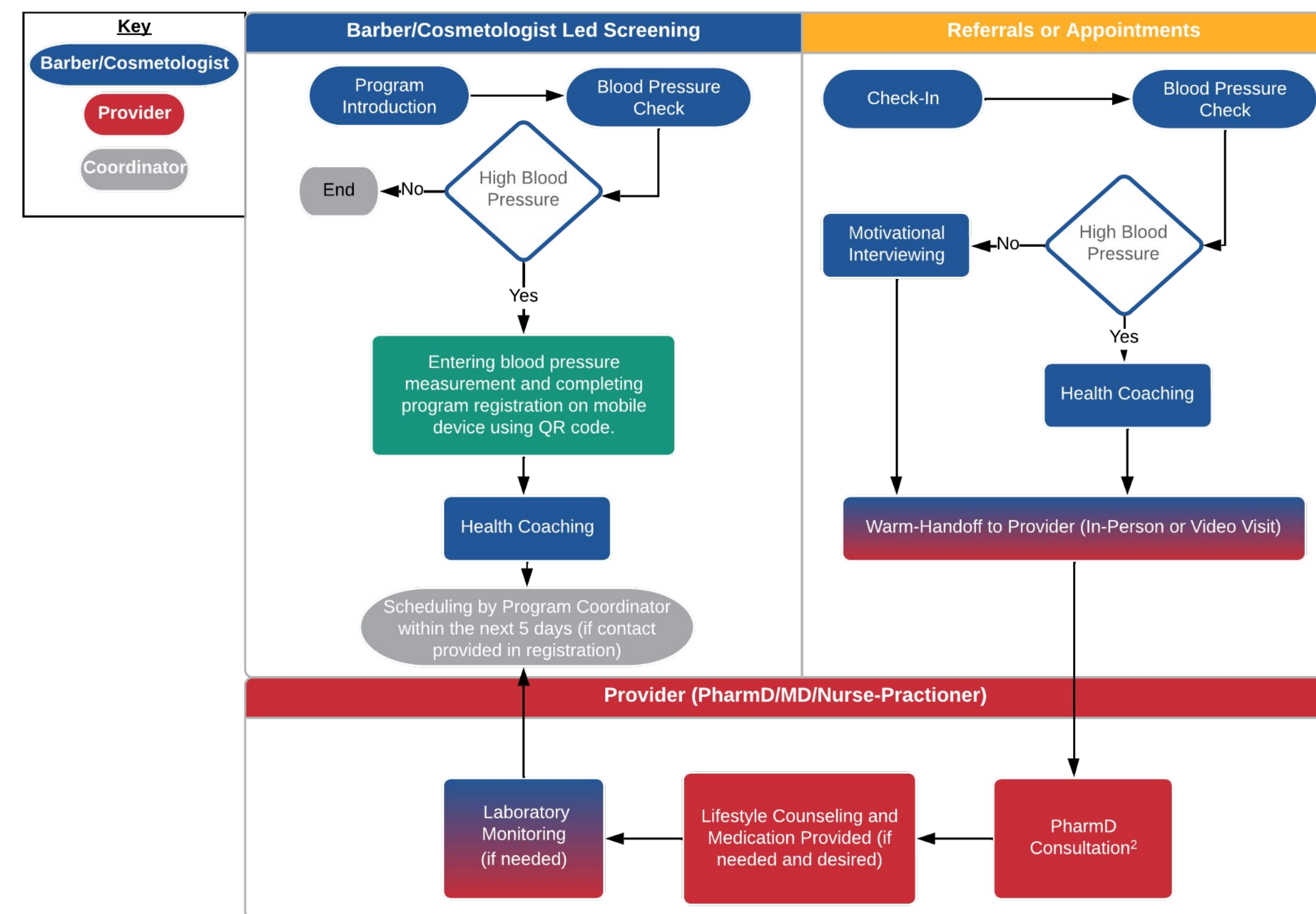
- **Strengthening** the capacity of barbers/cosmetologists to be health educators, navigators, coaches, & community leaders.
- **Building Trust** between health providers and black community in a sacred space, such as the barbershop, where dialogue and thought exchange occurs with a sense of safety.
- **Empowering our communities** to take agency in their own health and wellness through education and access to treatment.

METHODS

Participants are recruited through the following: 1) Blood pressure screening events held at partnered barbershops or at local community events 2) Local healthcare institutions or clinic-based referrals. All participants screened or referred for an elevated blood pressure reading ($\geq 135/85$) are contacted by a CHP staff member to schedule an intake appointment with the program hypertension-specialty pharmacist.

All initial intake appointments are scheduled at barbershops selected at the discretion of the patient with a health coach trained barber. After receiving a haircut and a confirmed diagnosis of hypertension by the program pharmacist, the patient is offered enrollment into the program. Newly registered patients are taken through an intake process and offered lifestyle counseling and medication initiation (if indicated). At the discretion of the CHP pharmacist, patients are scheduled for either bi-monthly or monthly follow-up appointments for blood pressure, in-shop lab monitoring, and compensated haircuts with health coach barbers for motivational interviewing. Active panel management for all enrolled participants in the program towards blood pressure goal. To ensure connection or reconnection with primary care home for collaborative management of chronic disease, we provide enhanced care coordination through secure sharing of speciality documentation of program treatment plans.

Outcomes



Patient Example 1

Age: 30s
PMH: Essential hypertension, CKD3, IBD
Social: lives with roommate in apartment

Blood pressure trends:
Visit 1-4: 153-169/99-110, 79-83
Visit 5-10: 133-138/76-92, 74-104 **117/82**

Medications: amlodipine --> nifedipine
Current regimen: Amlodipine 10 mg/Benazepril 40 mg

Patient Example 2

Age: 18
PMH: Essential hypertension, extensive family history of hypertension
Social: College student, Muay Thai, Basketball, vegan

Blood pressure trends:
Screening visit: 141/79
Visit 1: 141/87, 80
Visit 2-3: 136/71, 57; 130/74, 70
Visit 3-4: 121/61, 68; **121/64**, 74

Medications: None!
Lifestyle modifications: Tons!

LESSON LEARNED

- With historical context of Black barbershops and its cultural influence, in addition to its community health application, Black barbershops can be places of health promotion and outreach, community building, and treatment for the Black community.
- Incorporating barbers as health coaches into our patients treatment plan has significantly helped our patients to identify, reduce or prevent high blood pressure in clients and referred participants.
- Health coaching is most effective when teaching methods are client-centered, strength-based, and collaborative. We must incorporate opportunities for health coaching content review and revisiting of high-yield concepts to increase comfort amongst health coach barbers.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Cut Hypertension Program is establishing more partnerships with barbershops throughout the East Bay Area. We hope to partner with ten new barbershops before the end of the 2023 year. Additionally, the program plans to advance virtual care services as an alternative option for established patients by Spring 2023.

Additionally, the program will be exploring different outreach strategies to increase its overall patient panel, while also working more closely with clinical partners for more robust care-coordination and referral throughput. The program plans to transition all patients that have successfully managed to control their blood pressure by either reconnecting them with their primary care provider or referring them to a preferred healthcare institution for ongoing support.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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"I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the growth and development of peoples health in the community."
Donald Anderson, Magic2UBarbershop