

# Description of the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative

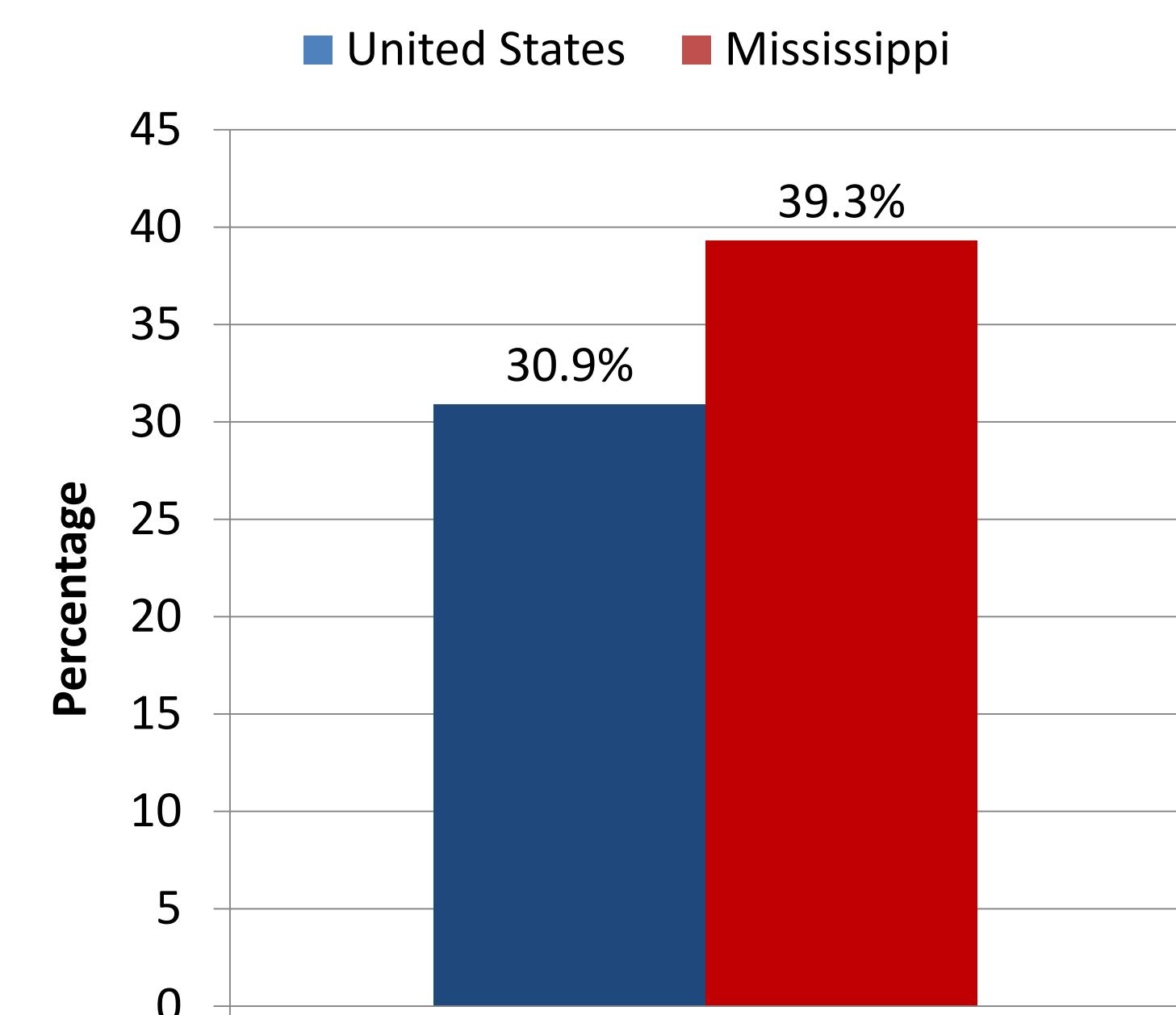
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## BACKGROUND

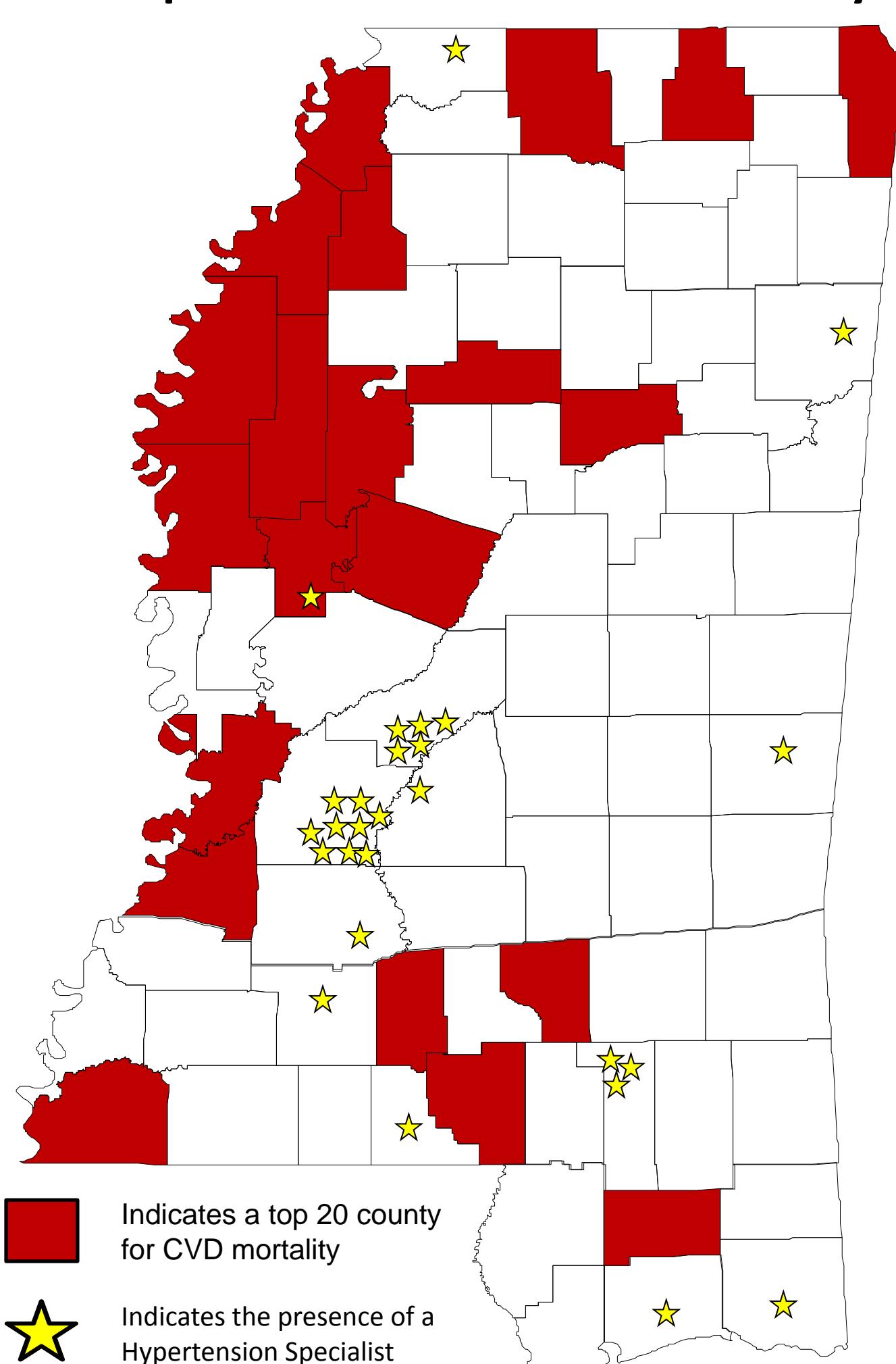
In 2009, the cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality rate for Mississippi was 316 deaths per 100,000 persons, the highest in the nation. Also, in 2011, the prevalence of hypertension was 30.9% for the U.S. and 39.3% for Mississippi (Figure 1). Strategies that address leading CVD risk factors, such as hypertension, can greatly reduce the burden of CVD. Therefore, the Mississippi State Department of Health's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program developed the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative (MHSI).

**Figure 1. Prevalence of Adults Who Have Been Told They Have High Blood Pressure, United States vs. Mississippi, 2011.**



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011.

**Figure 2. Location of Hypertension Specialists in Mississippi and Top 20 Counties for CVD Mortality 1999-2009.**



- In 2011, there were twenty-seven (27) Hypertension Specialists in Mississippi.
- Hypertension Specialists were located in only 13 of the 82 Mississippi counties.
- The majority of Hypertension Specialists were located in the Jackson Metropolitan Statistical Area (JMSA).
- Out of the leading counties for cardiovascular disease mortality, only one county had a Hypertension Specialist.

## OBJECTIVE

To describe the implementation of the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative (MHSI), a unique, population- and evidence-based quality improvement project to enhance hypertension detection, prevention, and treatment.

### PURPOSE OF MHSI

The purpose of the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative is to:

- Increase physicians' knowledge and skills in managing complex, treatment resistant forms of hypertension;
- Increase the number of physicians who are designated as hypertension specialists in Mississippi; and
- Increase the utilization of a nationally recognized hypertension registry in Mississippi.

### METHOD

The initiative was comprised of five major components:

- I. Development of the project framework and selection of partners;
- II. Meetings with leaders of the healthcare provider community;
- III. Statewide recruitment of physicians and certification test preparation;
- IV. Test administration and certification of results; and
- V. Pre- and post-test medical records review of patients of participating physicians.



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## RESULTS

**Figure 3. Schematic of the Mississippi Hypertension Specialist Initiative Implementation Process and Outcomes**



## DISCUSSION

- MHSI increased the number of designated hypertension specialists in the state of Mississippi by 11% (from 27 to 30).
- Participating physicians received specialized training in the best practices and quality of care monitoring for hypertension management.
- More work needs to be done on physician retention in the training program.
- MHSI could serve as a model of quality improvement initiatives that focus on reducing CVD morbidity and mortality.