

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORS AVAILABLE AT YONKERS RIVERFRONT LIBRARY *County Health Department Partnership Increases Access to Tool That Helps Identify Hypertension*

(White Plains, NY) – Westchester County Executive George Latimer, Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, Yonkers Public Library staff and the American Heart Association, along with Yonkers residents, today demonstrated the ease of checking your blood pressure with an automated blood pressure cuff now available to use or check out at the Yonkers Riverfront Library.

Three identical blood pressure cuffs were given to the library through a pilot program funded by a New York State grant to promote and provide opportunities for self-measured blood pressure monitoring in the community. Users sit down, slip their arm into the sleeve, relax and push a button -- the machine does the rest.

County Executive George Latimer said: “Placing these cuffs at the library will make it as easy to check your blood pressure as it is to borrow a book. That’s a good thing, because it can prompt you to see a doctor and learn strategies to reduce your blood pressure.”

Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, said: “Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is known as the silent killer because many people don’t know they have it until it is too late. By making these automated cuffs more accessible to the public, we hope to save lives and encourage residents to work with a health care provider to help bring their blood pressure under control.”

Amler continued: “One in three adults have hypertension, which increases the risk of heart disease -- the number one cause of death in Westchester. We can reduce our risk by maintaining a healthy weight, reducing our consumption of salt, fat, cholesterol and alcohol, exercising more and eating more fruits and vegetables.”

Damara Gutnick, MD, Medical Director of the Montefiore Hudson Valley Collaborative, co-chair of the American Heart Association’s Community Impact Committee and a Westchester board member, said: “Controlling high blood pressure can help people prevent devastating illnesses like heart attack and stroke. This program can help Yonkers residents assess and monitor their blood pressure at a time and place that is convenient for them. We know that this program can help people achieve a 10-point reduction in blood pressure over just a few months.”

Gutnick continued: “Simple lifestyle changes like limiting dietary sodium to 1,500 mg daily, and exercising 30 minutes per day can help bring down blood pressure numbers and improve the health of our residents.”

Ed Falcone, Library Director for Yonkers Public Library, said: "This is a new and innovative service that will have a direct impact on the health and well-being of our patrons. A big goal in our strategic plan was making the library a resource hub for residents seeking personal growth and solutions to everyday challenges. This becomes a reality through creative partnerships and working together towards strengthening public health.”

Through a partnership with CLUSTER, case managers will be available at the Yonkers Riverfront Library on designated days and times to assist residents with blood pressure monitoring, and library patrons can use the automated cuffs to check their own blood pressure when the library is open. Other services offered through the library include nutritional guidance, along with classes in yoga, Zumba and mindfulness that can help residents reduce their high blood pressure.

The County Health Department has 16 more automated blood pressure cuffs to distribute and wants to hear from other agencies and organizations that can make the monitors accessible to residents. For more information, contact Patrick Quinn at 995-6588.

Everyone who uses the cuff, as well as anyone monitoring their blood pressure at home with their own cuff, can track their blood pressure over time using the American Heart Association’s *Check, Change, Control*. online tracking tool. To create a free account, go to www.ccctracker.com; and use the campaign code CHKBP.

According to the CDC, 34.6 million adults in the US have uncontrolled hypertension; of these 11.6 million don’t know they have it. In New York, 4.8 million adults – one in every three – are estimated to have hypertension, and only 63 percent have it under control. In Westchester, an estimated 28.5 percent of adults were diagnosed with hypertension in 2016.

Normal blood pressure is less than 120/80, but one high blood pressure reading does not mean you have hypertension. Blood pressure must be measured at different times, while you are resting comfortably for at least five minutes. To diagnose hypertension, at least three readings greater than 120/80 are usually required.

More information about hypertension is available at www.westchestergov.com/health.

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About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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