

# ASH SPECIALIST PROGRAM INC.

DATE:

Friday, January 30, 2009

TO:

DESIGNATED SPECIALISTS IN CLINICAL HYPERTENSION

FROM:

Thomas D. Giles, MD, President, ASH Specialist Program Inc.

Henry R. Black, MD, President, American Society of Hypertension, Inc. (ASH)

***These are perilous times, particularly in the arena of health care. Although hypertension remains the most important cardiovascular problem facing the US population, those who are most expert in dealing with this problem, i.e., Designated Specialists in Clinical Hypertension, have no place at the negotiating table. It is time that we band together to make our desires and wishes known and to demand that adequate resources be dedicated to supporting our efforts for caring for those with hypertension, including adequate reimbursement for preventive efforts.***

***To meet this challenge, the Board of Directors of the ASH Specialists Program Inc., in collaboration with the ASH Board of Directors established the Association of Hypertension Specialists (AHS) as a Special Interest Group within ASH. The AHS will serve as an advocacy group dedicated to promoting increased recognition for expertise in the diagnosis and treatment of hypertension and providing increased resources for the care of patients with hypertension. Accordingly the AHS will host forums for designated Hypertension Specialists at the ASH Annual Scientific Meeting, as well as at other national and regional meetings, to address hypertension practice issues, including reimbursement. As a Designated Specialist in Clinical Hypertension you have been enrolled as a participating active member in this new initiative.***

***The initial goals of the Association of Hypertension Specialists (AHS) will be:***

- ***To obtain a medical specialty code description from AMA & CMS to identify a hypertension specialist.***
- ***In collaboration with the American Society of Hypertension***
  - ***To negotiate with CMS to recognize a higher level of service, and thus reimbursement, when patients with hypertension are seen by a hypertension specialist. To advocate for legislation to provide increased support for patients with hypertension, e.g. home blood pressure recorders.***
  - ***To establish a CPT code for cardiovascular risk assessment that could be performed by hypertension specialists.***

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- ***To establish at the national and local level credentialing criteria for technology related to hypertension, e.g. ambulatory blood pressure recording and interpretation, measures of vascular compliance, estimation of central blood pressure***
- ***To meet with members of the medical insurance industry to negotiate and promote recognition and increased reimbursement for hypertension specialists.***
- ***To host forums during the annual meeting of the American Society of Hypertension, and at other meetings, to learn of ways to improve the practice of the hypertension specialists, including the incorporation of new technology.***
- ***To devise brief presentations that may be used by national and local speakers to use when presenting to policy makers, i.e. government, insurance industry, hospital staffs, etc.***

***Since no group has taken up the role of acting as an advocate for the hypertension specialists that deal with this major U.S. health care issue, the AHS will fill this vacuum with your full and active participation.***