

BROADCAST- Hypertension control lag under new blood pressure guidelines

ANCHOR LEAD IN:

High blood pressure remains out of control for most Americans living with hypertension, even though effective treatments are widely available. An OSF HealthCare cardiologist weighs in.

VO OR RADIO PACKAGE:

Under updated guidelines, the long-standing 140/90 reading is now considered stage 2 hypertension, and a blood pressure of 130/80 mm Hg is considered stage 1. National data show nearly 80% of people with hypertension aren't hitting the 130 over 80 range.

Cardiologist Jason Trager (TRAY-gur) of OSF HealthCare says there's no single reason why so many people struggle to keep their numbers in a healthy range.

SOT – Dr. Jason Trager, Cardiologist

"Well, it's a little bit difficult to tell. And sometimes it could be access to the care where the patients aren't getting in to see their primary care docs and doing the primary care prevention type of stuff. Sometimes it could be related to the cost of the medications that are required, or some people just have high blood pressure, but they don't know it." (:22)

Trager says regular screenings, consistent follow-up and affordable care are key to helping more patients get their blood pressure under control and reduce their risk of heart attack and stroke. He also stresses that quitting smoking can cut that risk in half.