

# Supporting Access to Care to Address Atrial Fibrillation (Afib) Health Disparities

Improve afib awareness and education in women, Black, and Hispanic seniors in rural North Texas counties

## Why It Matters

Atrial fibrillation, the most common arrhythmia, is a complex condition that increases stroke risk five-fold and increases the risk of heart failure and other cardiac issues. Awareness of afib is low, and it may take years for women and those who are Black or Hispanic to be diagnosed. In the US, those who are Black are less likely to be treated for afib and more likely to have a stroke, and women have historically been under-treated and under-referred.

Stroke deaths in rural counties in Texas are disproportionately high for those 65+, including those who are Black, Hispanic, or women.



## Solution

Collaborate with local organizations, aging agencies, community health workers (CHWs), and patient advocates to raise awareness, address health literacy, and deliver education to those at risk in deprived North Texas counties by:

- Establishing an advocacy corps of volunteer retirees with afib and medical/science backgrounds
- Recruiting non-clinician CHWs from aging agencies supporting the at-risk senior community
- Developing and delivering training courses to volunteers and CHWs for educating women, Black, and Hispanic seniors about afib



## Impact

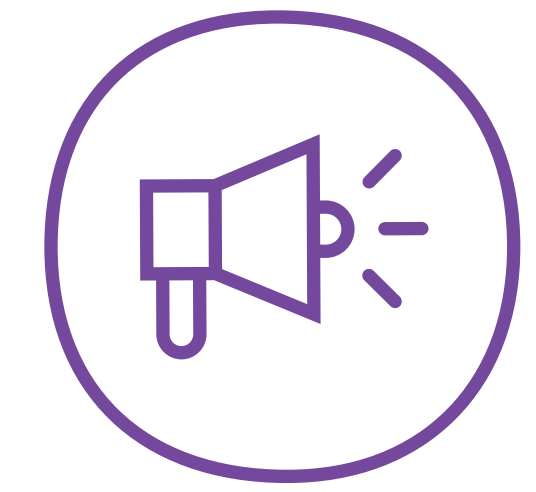
Program efforts are underway.



Relationships have been developed with leaders of Texas Area Agencies on Aging and the local agencies they work with to help inform their programs and bring resources to their non-clinician CHWs.



Patient advocates and CHWs are being trained to reach, educate, and support afib patients to ensure appropriate access to care. Training content is leveraged from **>2,000 web pages** and **>160 hours of video content** in the StopAfib.org website, forum, and video library.



A health equity “call to action” is being published to highlight disparities in Afib patient care and call for action to improve the care of underserved patients. Contributing organizations include the American College of Cardiology, the Heart Rhythm Society, the American Heart Association, the Association of Black Cardiologists, and the American Association for Thoracic Surgery.



[learn more >](#)

## Key Learnings

- Efforts to empower and educate patient advocates must be complemented by actions to raise healthcare professionals’ awareness of disparities.
- The health equity “call to action” helps address underserved communities’ concerns.

