

P.A.D. AWARENESS MONTH

PAD Awareness Month Toolkit

Table of Contents

- I.** Sample letter to lawmaker
- II.** Sample press release
- III.** Sample letter to the editor
- IV.** Sample social media posts
- V.** PAD Awareness Month Flyer
- VI.** Resources

Sample Letter to Lawmaker

Sending a letter to your lawmakers can be a great way to advocate for PAD patients and to increase awareness about PAD in your community. Below is an example letter to send to your lawmakers.

[DATE]

The Honorable **[LAWMAKER NAME]**

[ADDRESS]

Dear **[LAWMAKER NAME]**:

As your constituent and an individual with a personal connection to Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), I am writing to inform you that September is PAD Awareness Month — an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and offer support to individuals living with PAD in our community.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 18 million people in the United States suffer from PAD, a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the limbs. Estimates suggest that anywhere from 12 to 20 percent of individuals over the age of 60 are living with PAD.

Although the increased accessibility of vascular care procedures in the last decade have helped to reduce the number of amputations in patients with PAD, recent studies have found that more than 30 percent of patients who undergo non-traumatic amputation never have the arterial testing to evaluate whether they are candidates for revascularization or other interventions.

Arterial testing varies significantly based on patient, provider, and socio-economic characteristics with African-Americans being more than twice as likely to undergo amputation compared to other patients. Interventions such as revascularization which remove plaque in the arteries result in limb preservation, avoid amputation, and offer the best possible clinical outcome.

Over the last decade, vascular interventions have evolved from highly-invasive bypass procedures performed in an inpatient setting to minimally-invasive procedures performed in outpatient and office-based settings. We now have the ability as a country to eliminate non-traumatic amputations relating to PAD.

But we need your help. It is imperative that those with power ensure that PAD patients are protected from unnecessary amputation and always provided the necessary information and medical interventions that will save limbs and save lives.

I urge you to help spread awareness this month and support the PAD community in your policy decisions.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

Sample Press Release

When pitching any media outlet about PAD Awareness Month, a press release with additional information is helpful. Here is an example of a press release that could be sent to national and local media outlets.

CENTER LETTERHEAD

[VASCULAR CENTER] Urges Individuals to Know their Risks and Treatment Options During Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Month

September recognized nationally as PAD Awareness Month

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September __, 2016

Contact: Name
Phone

DATELINE — According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 18 million people in the United States suffer from Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce blood flow to the limbs. Estimates suggest that anywhere from 12 to 20 percent of individuals over the age of 60 are living with PAD.

Because of the widespread effects of PAD, September has been designated as Peripheral Artery Awareness Month, with the hopes of informing people about PAD and the available treatment options that can prevent unnecessary limb amputations and result in longer and better quality of life for patients.

Approximately 160,000 to 180,000 of the estimated 18 million Americans with PAD will undergo a limb amputation as result of PAD-related condition this year, resulting in lower quality of life, high medical costs, and shorter life expectancy. But even with these alarming numbers, general population awareness of PAD is estimated at only 25 percent.

Symptoms of severe PAD include leg pain, wounds on the toes or feet, gangrene and a loss of leg mass compared to the rest of the body. Individuals are at greatest risk for PAD if you have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or diabetes. African American and Hispanic populations are also at higher risk as are individuals with a history of smoking.

Improvements in technology have allowed for the migration of interventional services from hospitals to same-day interventions at a physician's office, which offers a more cost-efficient and patient-

preferred alternative to inpatient care. It is crucial for patients to have access to PAD screenings in the community setting to ensure the appropriate treatments are performed before undergoing an amputation.

During the month of September, it is important to increase understanding of PAD among the general public, yet we must also encourage policy makers to advance policies that ensure patients receive a vascular screening before amputation, which will undoubtedly save limbs, and potentially save lives.

PAD Awareness Month is supported by the CardioVascular Coalition (CVC), a national coalition representing physicians, care providers, advocates, and manufacturers who came together to advance community-based solutions designed to improve awareness and prevention of cardiovascular disease and peripheral artery disease, reduce geographic disparities in access to care, and secure patient access to high-quality, cost-effective, community-based interventional treatment across America.

####

Sample Letter to the Editor

Writing a letter to the editor of your local news outlet can help raise awareness about PAD in the community. Here are examples of Letters to the Editor on behalf of a vascular physician, patient, and outpatient center administrator.

Physician LTE

Dear Editor,

As a physician, I am observing Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Awareness Month, to increase public understanding the risks, effects and treatment options for PAD. A vascular disease that causes narrowing or blockage of arteries in the legs, PAD can result in life-altering limb amputations if not properly diagnosed and treated.

As a vascular specialist, I have treated [hundreds] of PAD patients over the course of my career. So I know the importance of recognizing PAD as soon as possible. With today's technology, minimally invasive procedures can be performed in a physician office setting to improve artery flow significantly, and ultimately save limbs. As a doctor, telling a patient a limb cannot be saved is one of the worst pieces of news to give. That's why early diagnosis is so important, so these effective and life-changing procedures can be performed in time.

I urge all patients to talk to your medical provider if you are experiencing limb pain or unusual discomfort. Early diagnosis and intervention not only save a patient's limb, but potentially a life as well.

During the month of September, I encourage everyone to participate in PAD Awareness month by showing support for the PAD community and helping the public better understand the risks, effects and symptoms of PAD. Visit www.cardiovascularcoalition.com for more information and resources.

[Insert Physician Name]

Patient LTE

Dear Editor,

Before I was diagnosed with Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), I had never heard of the disease. Like many Americans, I had a limited understanding of vascular disease, which I now know if left undiagnosed and untreated can lead to a life of pain, and even worse, the loss of a limb.

When I began experiencing leg pain a few years ago, I attributed it to the aches and pains of getting

older. But as a person [over the age of 50 living with diabetes], my physician informed me that I was at a higher risk of PAD. Through a screening of the arteries in my legs, my physician found a large blockage, which was the cause of extreme discomfort that had rendered me nearly immobile.

It is important to catch PAD in time so you can undergo any necessary endovascular procedures for the best outcome possible. If my doctor had not recognized PAD in time for the in-office procedure, I don't know if I would have my leg today.

During the month of September, which is PAD Awareness month, I encourage others to educate themselves about PAD, which effects an estimated 18 million Americans. Know your risks and the symptoms of PAD. Talk to your medical provider if you are experiencing limb pain or unusual discomfort. I know that my early diagnosis and appropriate screening not only saved my limb, but likely saved my life as well.

Visit www.cardiovascularcoalition.com for more information and resources.

[Insert Patient Name Here]

Administrator LTE

Dear Editor,

As the Administrator of [Vascular Center] in [Town], I witness the benefits of early diagnosis and appropriate screening of Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) every day. This September marks PAD Awareness month, a time to increase understanding of the life altering implications of this disease, which causes severe leg pain and can lead limb loss if left untreated.

The importance of maintaining one's vascular health is crucial to overall health, however too many Americans are unfamiliar with vascular disease, and PAD in particular despite the fact that an estimated 18,000 individuals in the U.S. are living with PAD.

Luckily patients have increased access to diagnosis and clinical intervention in the outpatient setting at facilities like [Vascular Center], which deliver quality vascular care in a community setting. With today's technology, minimally invasive in-office procedures can be performed to improve artery flow significantly, and ultimately save limbs. That's why early diagnosis is so important, so these effective and life-changing procedures can be performed in time.

During PAD Awareness Month, I encourage you to know your risks for PAD and understand your treatment options. There is no reason even one American should lose a limb when clinically advanced interventions are available right in our community.

[Insert Administrator Name Here]

#PADawareness Social Media Posts

Social media is a great way to spread awareness about a cause. Sharing this toolkit on social media through Facebook and Twitter gives many parties the opportunity to advocate for PAD Awareness. Below are some examples of Facebook and Twitter posts.

Sample Twitter Posts

Leg pain might be more than just the aches of getting older. Find out if you're at risk for #PAD: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADAwareness

Vascular physicians: Take action & promote #PADAwareness! Help raise awareness among #PAD patients: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE]

September is #PADAwareness Month. Learn more about #PAD & see how you can raise awareness: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE]

Approximately 18 million Americans suffer from #PAD. Do you know if you're at risk? [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADAwareness

Too many #PAD patients undergo limb amputation — learn why outpatient treatments are so important: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADAwareness

Saving a limb from amputation can also save a life! [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADAwareness

Sample Facebook Posts

September is PAD Awareness Month! If you are experiencing leg pains, it might be more than the aches getting older! Learn more: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADawareness

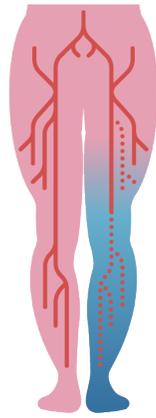
Vascular physicians: Download this toolkit to see how you can raise awareness about PAD and keep your patients healthy and informed [LINK TO TOOLKIT] #PADawareness

Do you suffer from PAD? It is time to raise awareness! Learn how to get involved during #PADawareness Month: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE]

Approximately 18 million Americans suffer from PAD. Are you at risk? [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADawareness

Too many PAD patients undergo limb amputations—that's why protecting access to interventional care in the community setting is so important. Learn how you can participate in #PADawareness Month: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE]

Saving a limb from amputation can also save a life! Learn more: [LINK TO LANDING PAGE] #PADawareness



P.A.D. AWARENESS MONTH

September Is Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Awareness Month

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a chronic circulatory condition, which if left untreated can result in unnecessary limb amputations. PAD affects approximately 18 million US citizens, and 160,000 to 180,000 of those patients are estimated to undergo limb amputation this year.

KNOW YOUR RISKS FOR PAD:

- Are you a 50 years or older?
- Are you a smoker?
- Do you have family members with the disease?
- Have you been diagnosed with diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure?
- Do you have kidney disease?

If you are answered YES to any of these questions, you may be at risk.

This September, join the CardioVascular Coalition and [the Amputee Coalition] in recognizing PAD Awareness month by showing support for the PAD patient community and helping the public better understand the risks and treatment options for PAD. By saving limbs through increased awareness and access to care, we can also save countless lives.

GET INVOLVED!

- ✓ Join the conversation on social media using #PADAwareness
- ✓ Share Your Story
- ✓ Contact Your Lawmaker

Sponsored By

**CardioVascular
COALITION**

Joining Together for Patient Access

WWW.CARDIOVASCULARCOALITION.ORG/PADARENESS

#PADARENESS

Resources

The one-pagers in the following section can be useful handouts for raising awareness about PAD.

Resources Table of Contents

- I.** About Peripheral Artery Disease
- II.** Peripheral Artery Disease Treatment & Prevention
- III.** Peripheral Artery Disease is More Prevalent Among African American Populations
- IV.** Peripheral Artery Disease Fast Facts

CARDIOVASCULAR CARE

About Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

What Is Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)?

Peripheral artery disease (PAD), also known as claudication, poor circulation, vascular disease, or hardening of arteries, is a chronic, life-threatening circulatory condition. PAD causes narrowing or blockage of the vessels that carry blood from the heart to the legs. The primary cause of PAD is atherosclerosis, or the buildup of plaque in the arteries. This occurs when arterial inflammation, cholesterol, calcium and scar tissue build up, forming plaque that clogs the arteries and slows blood flow to the legs. The more plaque that builds up on the inside walls of the blood vessels carrying blood from the heart to legs and arms, the more the arteries lose flexibility and narrow, putting patients at greater risk.

Risk factors for PAD, as identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), include smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and age over 60. PAD patients are at high risk of developing critical limb ischemia (CLI), a chronic condition that results in severe pain in the feet or toes, even while resting. Complications of poor circulation can include sores and wounds that won't heal in the legs and feet. Left untreated, the complications of CLI could result in amputation of the affected limb.

PAD patients are also at greater risk for heart attack and stroke.

Studies have found that the total annual US costs for patients with PAD exceed \$21 billion, including nearly \$10 billion for hospitalizations. In Medicare alone, one study estimated spending on PAD accounted for more than 2% of all Medicare spending.

PAD has been identified by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) as a priority area for comparative effectiveness research. One study suggested that endovascular therapy appears to be the least costly option in the short-run for patients with PAD.

Symptoms

Blockages can restrict blood flow to the muscles, causing muscle cramps, tightness or weakness, especially during activity. In the early stages of PAD, patients may not experience any symptoms. If PAD is not treated, though, blockages may continue to grow and restrict, or even completely block, blood flow. Common symptoms include:

- Leg pain when walking
- Muscle pain or cramping in legs and calf triggered by activity
- Leg numbness or weakness
- Coldness on lower leg or foot
- Sores on toes, legs or feet that won't heal
- Change in color of legs

CARDIOVASCULAR CARE

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) Intervention & Treatment

Over the last 15 years the interventional treatment of peripheral artery disease (PAD) has changed significantly with endovascular revascularization replacing surgically invasive procedures as the dominant therapy. Early detection and treatment are important to control the disease and allow patients a full selection of treatment options.

Diagnosis

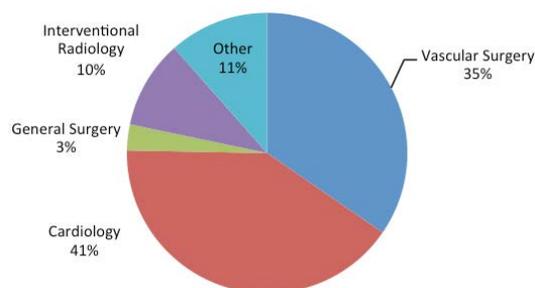
Many types of health care providers can diagnose and treat PAD. Family physicians, internists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and vascular specialists can all diagnose PAD by examining a patient's medical and family history, performing a physical exam, and conducting diagnostic tests.

PAD can be diagnosed through a variety of diagnostic procedures including:

- Ankle-brachial index (ABI): A common test used to measure the difference between blood pressure at the arm and at the ankle. A difference in the two areas indicates restricted blood flow.
- Ultrasound
- CT and MR angiograms
- Angiography
- Blood tests

Treatment

There are multiple options for treatment of PAD, ranging from medical interventions, surgical revascularization, and endovascular therapy. Specialists including vascular medicine specialists, vascular surgeons, cardiologists, podiatrists, and interventional radiologists can all treat patients diagnosed with PAD.



*Source: Avalere Health

Approaches to treatment include:

- Minimally invasive endovascular procedures
- Medical management
- Exercise and lifestyle modifications
- Surgical bypass
- Amputation

Minimally invasive procedures are now backed by years of clinical data and offers effective alternative to surgery or amputation and can be done in free-standing cardiovascular centers (FCVCs) to avoid hospitalization.

Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) is More Prevalent Among African American Populations



African Americans Exhibit Higher Risk of Limb Loss Resulting from PAD

- In a U.S. sample of 2,174 persons aged 40 years and older, African Americans were 2.8 times as likely as non-Hispanic whites to screen positive for PAD.ⁱ
- PAD is more common in African Americans than any other racial or ethnic group because conditions that increase the risk for developing PAD, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, are more common among African Americans.ⁱⁱ
 - An estimated one in every four African Americans between the ages of 65 and 74 has diabetes.
 - More than 40 percent of non-Hispanic blacks in the U.S. have high blood pressure.ⁱⁱⁱ
- When compared to non-Hispanic whites with PAD, African Americans with PAD have more severe disease and a greater reduction in walking distance, speed, and/or stair climbing.^{iv}
- Walking impairment in African Americans as compared to non-Hispanic whites is largely explained by a higher prevalence of asymptomatic disease in African Americans.^v

- African Americans have a higher prevalence of asymptomatic PAD (i.e., evidence of disease without leg symptoms). African Americans with asymptomatic disease are at increased risk for a delay in care and continuation of high-risk behaviors, including a sedentary lifestyle that predisposes them to disease progression.^{vi}

PAD-related amputation rates higher among African Americans

- Several studies have reported minority patients are much less likely to receive preventive vascular screenings and procedures.^{vii}
- Among PAD patients, minorities are less likely to have limb-sparing procedures such as angioplasty and lower extremity bypass and more likely to have amputation.^{viii}
- Compared to non-Hispanic whites, African Americans have 1.5 times the risk of limb loss attributable to PAD.^{ix}
- In regions where spending on revascularization procedures and related vascular care are highest, patients undergoing amputation are more likely to be African-American (14% in very slow spending regions, 20% in very high spending regions), and were slightly more likely to have coronary artery disease (13% in very slow spending regions, 15% in very high spending regions).^x
- Data showing higher rates of primary and repeat amputation for African American patients at hospitals with significant vascular surgery capacity and aggressive limb salvage policies, suggest that these rates may be even higher at less well equipped institutions. Improving access to primary and preventive care for lower-income patients could reduce amputation rates among African Americans.^{xi}

ⁱ E. Selvin and T. P. Erlinger, "Prevalence of and risk factors for peripheral arterial disease in the United States: results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999-2000," *Circulation*, vol. 110, no. 6, pp. 738-743, 2004

ⁱⁱ https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/heart/pad_extfactsheet_aa_508.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HighBloodPressure/UnderstandYourRiskforHighBloodPressure/High-Blood-Pressure-and-African-Americans_UCM_301832_Article.jsp

^{iv} African Americans and Peripheral Arterial Disease: A Review Article: <http://www.hindawi.com/journals/isrn/2012/165653/#B2>

^v C. Rucker-Whitaker, P. Greenland, K. Liu et al., "Peripheral arterial disease in African Americans: clinical characteristics, leg symptoms, and lower extremity functioning," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, vol. 52, no. 6, pp. 922-930, 2004.

^{vi} S. L. Eason, N. J. Petersen, M. Suarez-Almazor, B. Davis, and T. C. Collins, "Diabetes mellitus, smoking, and the risk for asymptomatic peripheral arterial disease: whom should we screen?" *Journal of the American Board of Family Practice*, vol. 18, no. 5, pp. 355-361, 2005.

^{vii} Brothers TE, Robison JG, Sutherland SE, Elliott BM. Racial differences in operation for peripheral vascular disease: results of a population-based study. *Cardiovasc Surg*. 1997;5:2631.

^{viii} Disparities in Amputations in Minorities: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3111767/#CR6>

^{ix} T. C. Collins, M. Johnson, W. Henderson, S. F. Khuri, and J. Daley, "Lower extremity nontraumatic amputation among veterans with peripheral arterial disease: is race an independent factor?" *Medical Care*, vol. 40, supplement 1, pp. I106-I116, 2002.

^x Relationship between regional spending on vascular care and amputation rate; <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4279246/>

^{xi} Racial differences in primary and repeat lower extremity amputation: results from a multihospital study: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15886667>

CARDIOVASCULAR CARE

Get The Facts: Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD)

- Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD) is a condition that affects approximately 18 million Americans.¹
- Patients with PAD who undergo amputation have significantly higher rates of mortality at 30 days, 1 year, and 3 years than patients with PAD who do not undergo amputation.²
- 48% of patients over 65 years old die within the first year after a major amputation and 71% die within 3 years after a major amputation.²
- PAD more commonly affects more women than men, yet women tend to develop symptoms of PAD in their 60s and 70s—a decade later than men.³
- About 20% of people older than 75 are affected by PAD.⁴
- Smoking increases the risk of developing PAD by three to five times.⁵
- One in every three people over the age of 50 with diabetes is likely to have PAD.⁶
- If you have heart disease, you have higher than a 30% chance of also having PAD.⁷
- 50% of patients with PAD have cerebrovascular disease (CBVD).⁸
- 60-90% of patients with PAD have coronary artery disease (CAD).⁹
- 20-50% of PAD patients are asymptomatic and another 10-35% have claudication (pain caused by too little blood flow).¹⁰
- 75% of the PAD deaths are due to cardiovascular disease.¹¹

¹ <http://cardiovascularcoalition.com/preventive-aspects-in-peripheral-artery-disease/>

² <http://cardiovascularcoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Jones-WS-et-al.-Am-Heart-J.-2013-May.-1655-809-15.pdf>

³ <http://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/peripheral-artery-disease>

⁴ http://www2.massgeneral.org/bmg/harvard_health/Men_Sep_09.pdf

⁵ <http://www.csi360.com/risk-factors>

⁶ <http://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/peripheral-artery-disease>

⁷ <http://www.csi360.com/risk-factors>

⁸ <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3767482/>

⁹ <http://dev.biomedix.com/userfiles/Criqui-GeneralizedNatureofAtherosclerosisPADpredictCAD.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/index.cfm/search-for-guides-reviews-and-reports/?productid=948&pageaction=displayproduct>

¹¹ <http://www.strokenetwork.org/newsletter/medication/PAD.HTM>