SAM GOLDHABER: I'm at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in Chicago. And today we had released of new cholesterol guidelines. These guidelines have reverted to giving us a target number LDL cholesterol of 70 milligrams per deciliter for high-risk patients to prevent myocardial infarction and other coronary events. I think it's commendable that we have reverted to a target number, because most cardiologists and many other practitioners never abandon the use of target numbers to begin with, despite the prior version of the guidelines.

As for my practice, where do I really want to go below 70? These tend to be in patients who have atherosclerosis in more than one arterial vascular bed of coronaries plus carotids plus renal arteries or plus arterial disease in the legs. That would be one example. I think another example is in a patient who might have been receiving a statin for primary prevention, and despite that statin therapy, suffered myocardial infarction. In those patients, I would want to get well below 70.

So I think 70 milligrams per deciliter is something I can regard as a starting point. But it's not a stopping point. I tell my patients that in general, the lower the better.