



National Diabetes Prevention Program Improves Health and Can Reduce Health Care Costs

BY JILL M. HUTT

HOW CAN YOU IMPROVE the health of your employees and their families and reduce health care costs at the same time? Offer the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP).

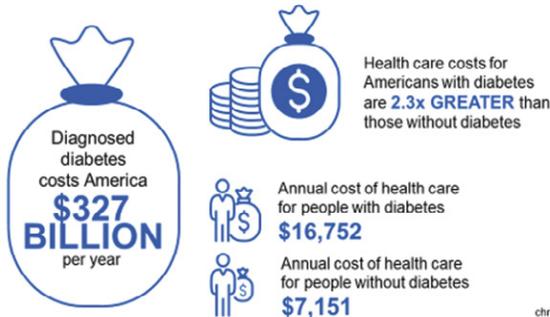
Diabetes is a chronic health condition affecting more than 34.2 million Americans at an annual cost of \$327 billion, including \$237 billion in direct medical costs and \$90 billion in reduced productivity, work-related absenteeism, unemployment from chronic disability, and premature mortality. Health care spending for people with diabetes is 2.3 times greater than those without diabetes (cdc.gov). In 2017 over 85,400 Delawareans age 18 or older had diabetes (dhss.delaware.gov). Annual diabetes and prediabetes costs in Delaware are estimated at \$1.1 billion, reflecting \$818 million in direct medical expenses and \$293 million in indirect costs (diabetes.org).

The burden of diabetes is devastating physically, emotionally, and financially, and can cause serious complications such as heart disease, kidney failure, and blindness. The need to prevent type 2 diabetes has never been greater.

Prediabetes is a condition where a person's blood sugar is high, but not high enough to be diagnosed as diabetes. Risk factors for prediabetes include age greater than 45, extra weight, a family history of diabetes, or lower levels of physically activity. One in three American adults have prediabetes and 90 percent don't know they have it (cdc.gov). In 2017, 94,628 – or 12.5 percent – of Delawarean adults reported being diagnosed with prediabetes (dhss.delaware.gov).

Without taking action, many people with prediabetes could develop type 2 diabetes within five years, placing additional burden on employers with increased direct and indirect costs. Fortunately, type 2 diabetes can

Preventing Diabetes Makes Sense for Employers



Potential VOI for Employers Covering the National DPP Lifestyle Change Program

Direct Financial Benefits

- Lower health care costs
- Lower workers' compensation costs
- Lower safety costs

Additional Financial Benefits

- Better job performance
- Decreased absenteeism
- Higher employee engagement
- Increased team and leadership effectiveness
- Lower turnover
- Enhanced recruitment
- Increased job satisfaction
- Avoided and delayed chronic illness and disability
- Better customer service
- Less retraining

be prevented. To address this urgent need the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed the evidence-based National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP).

The NDPP is a lifestyle change program proven to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. Participants learn to make healthy food choices, be more physically active, and find ways to cope with problems and stress. These lifestyle changes can cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by as much as 58 percent (71 percent for those 60 or older). The program is delivered in-person or online. Outcomes have shown up to 5-7 percent loss in body weight, reduced hypertension and improved cardiovascular health (cdc.gov). Public and private employers have reported success with employee engagement and outcomes after offering the NDPP (chronicdisease.org).

The NDPP is covered by many health insurers. Even without insurance coverage the cost of the NDPP is economical – typically \$300-\$600 under a

pay for performance program linked to key milestones (enrollment, completion, success). By offering the program, employers can realize a potential value on investment (VOI) in direct and indirect financial benefits. The opportunity to offer this benefit is supported by national and state governments, professional health associations, and organizations representing employers.

In the near future Delaware employers will receive an e-mail invitation to complete a brief survey designed to understand awareness of the NDPP and to identify opportunities to offer the NDPP to employees and their families. To learn more visit: <https://tinyurl.com/CDCDiab>

<https://tinyurl.com/DHSSDiab>

<https://tinyurl.com/GPBCHDiab> ■



Jill M. Hutt is vice president of member services at the Greater Philadelphia Business Coalition on Health, which serves employers in southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware. Visit www.gpbch.org for more information.

Wendy Bailey, trainer educator at Delaware Health and Social Services Diabetes Prevention and Control, contributed to this article.



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