

# Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition

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## Major Increase In Adult Diabetes

New research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reports diabetes among adults has increased substantially over the last decade. Between 1990 and 1998, a 70 percent increase in diabetes was found among individuals aged 30-39. Among those aged 40-49, the incidence of diabetes increased 40 percent, followed by a 31 percent increase among those aged 50-59. Dramatic increases were also noted among various ethnic groups: Hispanics had a 38 percent increase compared to Caucasians with a 29 percent increase and African-Americans with a 26 percent increase.

Researchers found that the prevalence of obesity has also increased rapidly in the United States. This increase will have a major impact on type 2 diabetes (formerly called adult onset diabetes) and other chronic diseases since the risk of the disease increases with the degree of obesity.

Approximately 800,000 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each year. It is the seventh leading cause of death in this country and a major contributor to health problems such as heart disease, stroke, blindness, high blood pressure, kidney disease, and amputations. Other studies estimate that in addition to the diagnosed cases, more than five million additional Americans have diabetes without knowing it, because the disease

produces few or no symptoms in its early stages.

With diabetes increasing at such an alarming rate, it is critical for people who have the disease to remain in regular contact with their health care provider. Scientific studies clearly show that even if diabetes is present, complications such as blindness, amputations, kidney failure, and heart attacks do not have to occur if patients follow preventive health measures.

## Diabetes Coalition Aims To Educate

### *State Lawmakers Aid Coalition Efforts*



*Senator Guy Velella (34<sup>th</sup> S.D.) and Assemblywoman Naomi Matusow (89<sup>th</sup> A.D.) were instrumental in obtaining more than \$50,000 to help fund the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition.*

Recent stories about the increase in adult diabetes have highlighted the need to make people more aware of problems associated with diabetes and to improve treatment of the disease. That is exactly the goal of the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition, a unique collaboration of managed care plans, provider organizations and state and county health officials.

The coalition recently launched a countywide Diabetes Education and Awareness program aimed at improving diabetes care in Westchester County. In kicking-off the campaign, the Coalition unveiled a new "tool kit" designed to assist doctors and other health care providers help patients who have diabetes and enlist patients as active participants in the care of their disease. In Westchester County, more than 30,000 people suffer from diabetes.

The Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition is being funded, in part, by more than \$50,000 in state budget funding. State Senator Guy Velella (34<sup>th</sup> S.D.), representing parts of Westchester County and the Bronx and Assemblywoman Naomi Matusow (89<sup>th</sup> A.D.), representing parts of Westchester County were instrumental in helping obtain the state funds.



Senator Guy Velella (left) joins members of the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition to help launch countywide education efforts.

"I have first-hand knowledge of the impact diabetes can have on your life," said Senator Velella at the October 5<sup>th</sup> kick-off event. "That's why I am committed to promoting efforts to educate the public about this disease."

Both Senator Velella and Assemblywoman Matusow have diabetes.

"This coalition represents an ideal collaboration," said Assemblywoman Matusow. "The joint dedication of all

of these groups will ensure we can get the job done and improve people's lives."



Assemblywoman Matusow (left) talks with a reporter about the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition project.

"The support of Senator Velella and Assemblywoman Matusow has been key to the success of the coalition," said Paul F. Macielak, president of the New York Health Plan Association (HPA) Council, which coordinated development of the coalition.

*"I am committed to promoting efforts to educate the public about this disease." – Senator Guy Velella*

The coalition's efforts are also supported by a grant from the American Association of Health Plans (AAHP).

Experts agree that early diagnosis and treatment effectively prevents more than half the complications of diabetes. The tool kit will facilitate providers' efforts to effectively treat the disease. Development and distribution of the tool kit is the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition's first initiative.

*"This coalition represents an ideal collaboration." – Assemblywoman Naomi Matusow.*

Health plans involved in the coalition include:

- ◆ Aetna US Healthcare
- ◆ CIGNA Healthcare of New York
- ◆ Empire BlueCross BlueShield
- ◆ Fidelis Care New York
- ◆ GENESIS Healthplan
- ◆ HealthSource/Hudson Health Plan
- ◆ HIP Health Plan of New York
- ◆ Independent Health
- ◆ Oxford Health Plans
- ◆ PHS Health Plans
- ◆ UnitedHealthcare

Other coalition partners include:

- ◆ American Association of Health Plans
- ◆ American College of Physicians – American Society of Internal Medicine, New York State Chapter
- ◆ Bronx-Westchester Chapter of the New York State Academy of Family Physicians
- ◆ IPRO
- ◆ Medical Society of the State of New York
- ◆ New York Health Plan Association Council
- ◆ New York State Academy of Family Physicians
- ◆ Westchester County Department of Health
- ◆ Westchester County Medical Society.

For more information, contact the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition at 1-877-291-9662.

## Diabetes “Tool Kit”

The coalition’s diabetes education and awareness tool kit, initially distributed to 1,200 physicians throughout the county, includes the following materials designed to assist physicians in caring for patients who have diabetes:

♥ **Common Guidelines for Diabetes**

All health plans participating in the coalition have agreed to endorse a common Guideline for Adult Diabetes Care, which lays out minimum expectations for care and highlights basic medical care for people with diabetes. The guideline is being distributed to all physicians practicing family medicine, internal medicine, general practice and endocrinology in Westchester County.

♥ **Individual Patient Flow Sheet**

The flow sheet, reflecting the recommendations found in the Guidelines for Adult Diabetes Care, will allow providers to track diabetes management over time by documenting diabetes medications, exams and test results.

♥ **“Take Off Your Shoes and Socks” Poster**

Reminder posters for exam rooms to help ensure patients at high risk receive a comprehensive screening of the feet for possible diabetes foot complications.

♥ **Diabetes Chart Stickers**

These stickers, highlighting key screening tests, can be placed on the outside of a chart to identify patients with diabetes.

♥ **Individual Patient Record**

A wallet card that provides patients with additional information about their illness, explains preventive measures and includes reminders

for important tests to actively engage patients in their diabetes care.

♥ **Patient Brochure**

Written in English and Spanish, it explains the importance of regular check-ups and the effectiveness of receiving preventive tests and exams, and encourages people to learn more about diabetes.

♥ **Bookmark**

This informational bookmark, developed by IPRO and distributed in a recent mailing on diabetic care, has been incorporated into the Westchester Coalition’s tool kit to help improve diabetes care in Westchester County.

All materials are consistent with information distributed by the American Diabetes Association, IPRO and HCFA.



*A poster for exam rooms will help providers and patients remember an important foot screening for people with diabetes.*

## For More Information About Controlling Your Diabetes, Contact:

**Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition**  
1-877-291-9662  
[www.takingondiabetes.org](http://www.takingondiabetes.org)

**American Diabetes Association**  
1-800-342-2383  
[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

**National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse**  
1-301-654-3327  
[www.niddk.nih.gov/health/diabetes/ndic.htm](http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/diabetes/ndic.htm)

**Centers for Disease Control**  
[www.cdc.gov/diabetes](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes)

**Diabetic Retinopathy Foundation**  
[www.retinopathy.org/index.html](http://www.retinopathy.org/index.html)

**National Eye Institute**  
[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)

**National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases**  
[www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov)

## IMPORTANT WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR DIABETES

- ♥ Keep routine appointments with your doctor
- ♥ Have your blood pressure checked regularly
- ♥ Monitor blood sugar levels including hemoglobin A1c
- ♥ Check your feet daily
- ♥ Have a yearly dilated eye exam
- ♥ Have a yearly kidney function test
- ♥ Have a yearly flu shot
- ♥ Have a yearly cholesterol check
- ♥ Do not smoke
- ♥ Follow a meal plan designed around your personal tastes and nutritional needs
- ♥ Take medications as directed
- ♥ Learn to exercise routinely

The more you know about diabetes and managing the disease, the better you will be able to spot early warning signs and get the medical attention you need to successfully care for your diabetes.

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