

Assessment of the State of Employer Diabetes Programs and Initiatives

As part of their ongoing work with *Taking on Diabetes*, the Employers' Managed Health Care Association (MHCA) developed information on the prevalence and type of diabetes programs with employers. The baseline data for identification of employers with diabetes programs was determined from a needs assessment project that is reported in **Creating A Business Partnership for Change**. A sample of both MHCA's and the National Business Coalition on Health's (NBCH) membership was surveyed. An additional step was initiated to identify those employers who did not respond to the needs assessment who may have a diabetes program. An **Employer Directory** of diabetes program that describes the programs of respondents is available for details about individual employer program.

Total response rate was 70% for MHCA. Results from the assessment show:

- ❖ 61% of respondents do not have a diabetes-specific program
- ❖ 39% of respondents do have a diabetes program
- ❖ 35% of those with a diabetes program indicate the program is through their health plan or pharmacy management company.

Disability Prevention, Health Promotion & Disease Management Program Components by Condition Number of Coalitions and Employers Reporting by Program and Program Component

DIABETES	NBCH RESPONSE	MHCA RESPONSE
Consumer Education	8	19
Extended Coverage and/or Supplies and Services at Reduced Cost	5	5
Screening, Risk, Identification	5	14
Monitoring of Key Health Indicators	6	16
Onsite Services (at the worksite)	2	8

Observations from Assessment and Interviews with Employers with Diabetes Programs

The purchasers want simplified and concise information based on evidence for the business case yet flexible with a broad base of options. The key observations from the assessment and interviews are:

- ❖ **Purchasers need business case development tools and information.** The information needs to be flexible, easy to use and adaptable to a variety of workplace and industry settings and types. There is a need for an approach to assess disease burden that allows the employer to develop the rationale for the diabetes program and to measure the program's effectiveness. Evidence-based approaches are necessary, including information on program features that have proven most effective. Employers are concerned that the resources invested in a program be appropriate.
- ❖ **Purchasers are concerned about value.** The combination of quality and cost measure value for employers. Quality includes clinical and service components; cost includes direct and indirect health care costs. The expectation is that quality improvements will lead to cost avoidance and/or reduction with diabetes (or any other targeted program.) The improvement of measures for absenteeism and presenteeism as both direct and indirect costs are considered relevant for employer concerns with productivity. Purchasers want to measure the effectiveness of their diabetes programs or receive reports from their health plans or disease management vendors.
- ❖ **Purchasers need trusted sources of information.** To assist in their purchasing decisions and for their employees and family members for consumer health education and information, employers want trusted sources to provide the tools and support to develop, implement, and measure the diabetes program. Employers want to have more and better information for their consumers.
- ❖ **Employers have differing needs and approaches.** Each employer has unique programs and relationships with its own workforce. To deal with health care cost and quality means flexibility is needed in services, information, and tools. Unique employer circumstances, industry variation, work shifts and cultural differences must all be considered in the development of a successful program.
- ❖ **Purchasers are looking to work more effectively with their health plans.** One third of the assessment respondents with a diabetes program stated that the program was managed by their health plan. Employers are seeking more effective ways to work with health plans to identify and treat their patients with diabetes, including education and more consumer involvement in self-care.