



Taking on Diabetes—Focus on Community Collaboratives

Taking on Diabetes, the first of American Association of Health Plans' (AAHP) three chronic care initiatives, aims to achieve dramatic reductions in vision loss, end-stage renal disease, and cardiovascular disease (all tragic consequences of uncontrolled diabetes). Taking on Diabetes is a joint program of the AAHP and the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Funding for the initiative is being provided by unrestricted educational grants from Pharmacia & Upjohn, Schering Diabetes, and SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals. Community coalitions in Kansas City, Mo., New Mexico, and Westchester County, N.Y. are outgrowths of the Taking on Diabetes collaboration. All three community partnerships receive additional support for an onsite coordinator from a grant provided by The Commonwealth Fund. ❖

New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes

The New Mexico Partnership, officially known as "New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes," has finalized the New Mexico Diabetes Practice Guideline, which was released at a press conference on November 20, 2000. The guideline has the support of all New Mexico health plans, the New Mexico Department of Health, the New Mexico medical societies and other organizations (Please see list at the end of this section.) It will be distributed to all primary care physicians as well as specialists who care for diabetics in New Mexico. It will also be distributed to nurse practitioners, physician assistants, and certified diabetes educators. The guideline is available in an 8-1/2 x 11-inch format as well as a laminated pocket-sized guide.

The press event occurred on November 20, 2000 in Albuquerque, N.M. The New Mexico Secretary of Health, Alex Valdez, headlined the event and was joined by representatives from New Mexico health plans, medical professional societies and Taking on Diabetes staff. In addition, all supporting organizations listed below took part. AAHP staff worked with local New Mexico organizations as well as the ADA for complete press coverage of this event.

New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes has been working on a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidelines. The partnership will begin by compiling Health Plan Employer Data and Information Set (HEDIS) data to establish a performance baseline against which changes occurring after distribution of the guidelines can be evaluated. The use of a diabetes registry is being reviewed and may result in a pilot proposal.

In addition to the development and distribution of the guidelines, New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes has reviewed tools to assist providers and staff in caring for individuals with diabetes. The group will periodically mail a catalog describing recommended materials and will distribute requested materials through a single source. The catalog also will list local resources. To update and evaluate the effectiveness of the catalog, an evaluation form will be included.

The plans are currently working on a process for distributing provider profiles from participating health plans along with the mailings of the catalog.

Supporting Organizations, New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes

- ◆ American Association of Health Plans
- ◆ American Diabetes Association
- ◆ American Diabetes Association, New Mexico Area Office
- ◆ Blue Cross and Blue Shield of New Mexico and HMO New Mexico
- ◆ Cimarron Health Plan
- ◆ Indian Health Services
- ◆ LifeCourse Health Plans
- ◆ Lovelace Health Systems
- ◆ Medical Assistance Division, New Mexico Human Services Department
- ◆ New Mexico Academy of Family Physicians
- ◆ New Mexico Chapter Council, American College of Physicians—American Society of Internal Medicine
- ◆ New Mexico Department of Health

Supporting Organizations List continued on Page 4

The National Exemplary Practice Program

The American Association of Health Plans (AAHP) and the Employers' Managed Health Care Association (MHCA) developed the National Exemplary Practice Program to identify exemplary practices in the management of chronic conditions. The goal of the National Exemplary Practice Program is to encourage the rapid adoption or adaptation of innovative ideas and approaches to chronic care delivery throughout the managed care industry.

The Exemplary Practice Program selected the chronic conditions of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and asthma for evaluation in 2000.

A successful practice:

- ◆ Ensures continuity, coordination, and monitoring of the disease condition.
- ◆ Provides care that contributes to superior clinical outcomes and enhances quality of life.
- ◆ Results in a satisfying experience for the member and an economical expenditure of resources for the plan.

In addition, successful practices address a significant portion of the care management process for the clinical condition and demonstrate improvement in outcomes.

The 2000 Award Winners are:

Exemplary Practice—Asthma

Blue Care Network of Michigan 🇺🇸 Asthma Management Program, Southfield, MI

The 2000 National Exemplary Practice Award Program winner for Asthma is Blue Care Network of Michigan (BCN) for their Asthma Management Program. This program is designed to address the needs of BCN's more than 24,000 members with asthma through collaborative partnership between the plan, member and primary care physician. BCN empowers members through education to promote effective self-management. BCN's disease management and case management programs are strongly linked to ensure members receive consistently high-quality, individualized service. Data on the population is continuously monitored and updated and performance feedback to physicians is an essential aspect to the care process.

Exemplary Practice—Cardiovascular Disease

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia 🇺🇸 Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) Proactive Care Management, Atlanta, GA

The 2000 National Exemplary Practice Award Program winner for Cardiovascular Disease is Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia for their Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) Proactive Care Management program. This program acts as an extension of the physician's plan of treatment to increase member awareness and understanding of CHF, improve their quality of life, increase appropriate medication use and compliance, and decrease emergency room visits as well as CHF-related hospital admissions. Through a comprehensive approach to member education, physician notification, coordination of services and telemonitoring when appropriate, the CHF program has improved members' understanding of CHF, affected the number and duration of hospitalizations, and increased their perceived quality of life.

Exemplary Practice—Diabetes

Kaiser Permanente's Care Management Institute 🇺🇸 Integrated Diabetes Care Program, Oakland, CA

The 2000 National Exemplary Practice Award Program winner for Diabetes is Kaiser Permanente's Care Management Institute (CMI) for their Integrated Diabetes Care Program (IDC). The overriding objective of the Integrated Diabetes Care Program is to enhance the health of its members with diabetes, control diabetes disease progression, and prevent disability. Five key strategies are employed to effect successful implementation: feedback reports, in-reach reminders, patient-driven reminders, clinician educational methodologies, and patient educational methodologies. The evaluation of the IDC is conducted through CMI's annual National Outcomes Reports. These studies, beginning in 1996, identify more than 330,000 Kaiser Permanente members with diabetes and report on numerous clinical and process outcomes for these members, including case identification, glycemic screening and control, lipid screening and control, eye examination, renal screening and treatment, and hospital utilization. This intervention will be sustained over time through the continuing collaboration of Kaiser Permanente's multiple Regions, facilitated by the Care Management Institute, backed by national program leadership.

Descriptions of the 2000 National Exemplary Practice Award Winners will soon be available on the Taking on Diabetes website, www.takingondiabetes.org, in the Best Practices section—see "Searchable Database Under Construction" article.

Searchable Database Under Construction

The Taking on Diabetes initiative is developing a resource that will offer participating health plans the opportunity to access information on successful practices in diabetes management, treatment, education, and screening. This searchable database will contain abstracts of published articles and federal quality improvement projects that were identified through a comprehensive literature and program review. It will also contain descriptions of past AAHP award winning programs in chronic disease and Quality Improvement/Preventive Health Activity summaries (QIA's).

Users will be able to search by source, by size of plan participating in activity, by geographic region, by type of activity (e.g., foot care, eye care), and by organizational type, among others. The searchable database will also link to full text articles, program descriptions, and other complete documents.

An online submission form is also under development that will allow for electronic transmission of programmatic information. The Taking on Diabetes program office will contact participating health plans in the coming months with additional information about submitting abstracts and accessing the database.

Managed Health Care Association Update

Taking on Diabetes continues to work with the Employers' Managed Health Care Association (MHCA) to develop tools and initiatives that will better enable health plans and health care purchasers to work together to improve care for people with diabetes. Currently, MHCA has completed a needs assessment as a follow-up to the monograph, "What Employers Can Do." The needs assessment queried MHCA membership about current programs, identified areas of interest for future tools and project development, and defined the current understanding of employers regarding diabetes. A follow-up phone interview with those employers who have programs will complete the information development process. The resulting information will be used to develop a directory of employer programs and report on the state of diabetes support exhibited by large employers.

Forming a Coalition of Health Plans?

Taking on Diabetes can help...

Collaborating to improve diabetes care offers benefits in terms of reinforcing a consistent message on standards of care, working with the larger health plan community and demonstrating to consumers the commitment of health plans to high quality chronic care.

If you would like to form a community wide partnership in your area, Taking on Diabetes can help through:

- ◆ Providing lists of other Taking on Diabetes health plans and contact names in your area.
- ◆ Providing examples of guidelines and toolkits developed at other collaborative partnerships.
- ◆ Providing your community partnership with a link on our website.
- ◆ Providing downloadable tools for consumers, health plan staff, providers and clinics.

Please visit the Taking on Diabetes website, www.takingondiabetes.org, for information on community partnerships in Kansas City, MO, Westchester County, NY and Albuquerque, NM, as well as descriptions of effective community practices (see the 'Compendium of Best Practices') and other materials. Also, if you wish to reach Taking on Diabetes staff, please call Catherine Ehlen, program manager, 202/778-8478 or via email cehlen@aaahp.org.

Type 2 Diabetes on the Rise in American Indian Children:

Health Groups Enter National Diabetes Month Advising Teens to "Stay Fit"

Recent health studies show a growing number of American Indian children—as young as age 10—are being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, the type of diabetes usually associated with adults. Since much of this trend can be linked to excess weight and sedentary lifestyles, the National Diabetes Education Program, a joint program of the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Association of Indian Physicians are sending a message to American Indian teens to get active and stay fit.

"Until recently, type 2 diabetes was rarely seen in people under age 30," said Dr. Yvette Roubideaux, chair of the National Diabetes Education Program's American Indian work group. "Even young people who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop serious diseases, like diabetes. We want teens to know that regular physical activity and staying fit can go a long way toward helping to prevent this disease and its serious complications," Roubideaux said.

Diabetes is one of the most serious health challenges facing American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States today. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, nine percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives have diagnosed diabetes. On average, American Indians and Alaska Natives are 2.8 times as likely to have diagnosed diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age. Moreover, up to 50 percent of Pima Indians over age 35 have type 2 diabetes—the highest prevalence rate in the world.

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) and the Association of American Indian Physicians launched a national awareness campaign last year to address this critical situation. The Control Your Diabetes. For Life. campaign stresses the seriousness of diabetes and urges people to control their disease.

"The goal of the Control Your Diabetes. For Life. campaign is to let American Indians and Alaska Natives with diabetes know that by controlling their blood sugar levels they can reduce their risks for the devastating complications of diabetes, improve their overall health, and enjoy a better quality of life," said Roubideaux. "We realize that messages to American Indian youth now must include the message of staying fit and getting regular physical activity which can help prevent this devastating disease."

For more information on the NDEP's Control Your Diabetes. For Life. campaign, contact the NDEP at 800-860-8747 or visit the NDEP website at <http://ndep.nih.gov> on the Internet.

Taking on Diabetes in Westchester County, New York

In October, the New York Health Plan Association, working with Taking on Diabetes, released a common diabetes guideline (Please visit the Taking on Diabetes website for a copy of the guideline and other materials, www.takingondiabetes.org). The guideline was released at a press event held in early October in Westchester, NY. This event featured Taking on Diabetes representatives, representatives from the Westchester, New York Diabetes Coalition, health plan personnel, and state government officials (For press materials, please visit the Press Room at AAHP's website, www.aahp.org).

As in New Mexico, the foundation of this guideline is the ADA's comprehensive information on procedures and goals for diabetes care. The New York coalition is providing 1200 physicians with tool kits that include the guideline. Plans have developed a coordinated process for follow-up with physicians to assess whether physicians are incorporating the materials into their practices.

All of the health plans that provide coverage for citizens in Westchester are partners in the local effort. (See below for list of partners.)

Partners in the Westchester County New York Diabetes Coalition:

- ◆ American Association of Health Plans
- ◆ American College of Physicians—New York State Internal Medical Society
- ◆ AetnaUS Healthcare
- ◆ Bronx-Westchester Chapter of the New York State Academy of Family Physicians
- ◆ 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
- ◆ IPRO
- ◆ Medical Society of the State of New York
- ◆ New York Health Plan Association Council
- ◆ New York State Academy of Family Physicians
- ◆ Oxford Health Plan
- ◆ PHS Health Plans
- ◆ Westchester County Department of Health
- ◆ Westchester County Medical Society

Kansas City Collaborative on Diabetes Care

The Kansas City collaborative on diabetes care recently completed its first quarter, with participation from teams representing four health plans and six affiliated providers. The collaborative in Kansas City differs substantially from the New Mexico and the Westchester, N.Y. collaboratives. Health plans in Kansas City participate in the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) Breakthrough Series.

The collaborative uses a clearly defined performance improvement methodology to achieve rapid improvements in clinical care and administrative processes. Teams are formed with representatives from a health plan and at least one primary care practice site to identify and test changes in the delivery of chronic care. The collaborative participants will track the impact of those changes on target measures of diabetes care over time.

In addition to recruiting a primary care practice partner, participating health plans have dedicated significant staff time to team meetings, data gathering and tracking, identifying and testing changes, and collaborating with participants from the other teams.

The four Kansas City teams represent the following organizations:

- ◆ Aetna US Healthcare and The University of Kansas Family Practice Department
- ◆ Family Health Partners and a primary care practice site to be announced
- ◆ FirstGuard Health Plan, Swope Parkway Health Center, and International Diabetes Center
- ◆ United Healthcare, Olathe Medical Services, and Olathe Medical Center

Supporting Organizations, New Mexico

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- ◆ New Mexico Diabetes Advisory Council
- ◆ New Mexico Integrated Services Network
- ◆ New Mexico Hospitals and Health Systems Association
- ◆ New Mexico Medical Society
- ◆ New Mexico Medical Review Association
- ◆ New Mexico Primary Care Association
- ◆ Presbyterian Health Plan
- ◆ The University of New Mexico Department of Family and Community Medicine; The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center University Hospital; The University of New Mexico School of Pharmacy

For more information, visit the Taking on Diabetes website directly at www.takingondiabetes.org, or via the AAHP website at www.aahp.org.

The American Association of Health Plans represents over 1,000 HMOs, PPOs, and other similar health plans that provide coverage for 140 million Americans.

The American Diabetes Association is the nation's leading voluntary health organization supporting diabetes research, information, and advocacy. Founded in 1940, the association supports affiliate offices in every region of the country, providing services in more than 800 communities.

Taking on Diabetes is supported by unrestricted educational grants from the following:

