

# As prediabetes burdens nation, new solution available for physicians

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In the average primary care practice, it's likely that one-third of patients over age 18, and half over age 65, have prediabetes. A new solution from the AMA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can help physicians prevent patients from progressing to diabetes and contribute to a healthier nation.



More than 86 million American adults have prediabetes, the precursor to type 2 diabetes—but nine out of 10 aren't even aware they have the condition. Every year, more people develop prediabetes, increasing by about 51 percent between 2007 and 2012, according to a December study published in *Diabetes Care*.



With these increased burdens on the health care system come increased costs, according to the study—an estimated national cost of \$322 billion.

To take on this challenge and help physicians and care teams curb the growth and prevalence of prediabetes, the AMA's Improving Health Outcomes initiative and the CDC today announced a call to take urgent action with *Prevent Diabetes STAT: Screen, Test, Act – Today™*.

The new, multi-year partnership will help physicians tap diabetes prevention programs in their communities or online. In 2012, the CDC launched the National Diabetes Prevention Program based on research led by the National Institutes of Health, which showed that individuals at high risk of

developing type 2 diabetes who participated in structured lifestyle change programs saw a significant reduction in the incidence of the disease.

Meanwhile, the AMA spent the past year working with the YMCA of the USA and 11 physician practice pilot sites in four states to increase physician screening for prediabetes and referral of patients with prediabetes to diabetes prevention programs offered by local YMCAs—which use the CDC’s program.

Care teams from the AMA’s work, along with work conducted by the CDC, helped inform the development of a new toolkit for physicians to learn the best methods of screening, testing and referring high-risk patients to diabetes prevention programs in their communities or online.

Physicians can use the toolkit to:

- | Understand the science behind diabetes prevention programs and make the case to partners or others in the practice about the value of incorporating diabetes prevention screening and referral into workflows
- | Engage patients with diabetes risk assessments, materials on what to do if they are found to have prediabetes and ways to follow up and refer patients to local programs
- | Incorporate screening, testing and referring into your workflow, including point-of-care identification, retrospective identification using your electronic health record to find potential candidates for referral and commonly used CPT® and ICD codes

“It’s time the nation comes together to take immediate action to help prevent diabetes before it starts,” said AMA President Robert M. Wah, MD. “America needs frontline physicians and other health care professionals, as well as key stakeholders such as employers, insurers and community organizations, to mobilize and create stronger linkages between the care delivery system, our communities, and the patients we serve.”

Watch *AMA Wire*® for more on how physicians are incorporating prediabetes screening, testing and referral into their practices.