

# Can you afford to offer a diabetes prevention program? Do this math

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More than 30 million Americans have it, some 7 million do not even know it, and a whopping 84 million are at risk of developing it. In fact, the numbers around type 2 diabetes are so huge that they are almost abstract. But if you are in a primary care practice, one number should make this public health crisis concrete: Up to one-third of your patients 18 or older are at risk for prediabetes.

The good news is that help is available: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) is an evidence-based lifestyle change program that can cut diabetes diagnoses in half over three years. An AMA budgeting tool helps you define the costs associated with the program—from design and training to staffing and benefits—and build an annual economic projection.

The National DPP lifestyle-change program budget-considerations tool is part of a suite of resources developed by the AMA to help physicians and their care teams improve patient outcomes by preventing or delaying progression to type 2 diabetes, as well as cut medical expenditures associated with treating the disease and its complications. While the tool is still undergoing beta-testing, updates are underway with the goal of finalizing in the coming months.

Understanding the cost implications of the National DPP is key, so the budget considerations tool identifies the program's fixed and variable costs to help practices first gather the information they need to complete the template. These include the expenses of developing process plans, hiring a lifestyle coach, providing IT and other support services, and even engaging patients and physicians.

Once those numbers are entered, the spreadsheet calculates the total cost to the organization and the average cost per participant. It assumes 16 core sessions and at least six maintenance sessions per cohort per year, but the number of cohorts and number of participants are customizable.

A diabetes-prevention cost savings calculator then projects the program's return on investment over time. For example, using an average cost of \$450 per participant, a health care organization with 3,000 patients could save more than \$100,000 over three years by avoiding the additional medical costs associated with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes.

By using resources such as the budget-considerations tool and the diabetes-prevention cost savings calculator, organizations can seamlessly estimate costs associated with implementing a diabetes prevention strategy and set their team up for success.