

## Physicians work with YMCA to prevent diabetes in two more states

APR 8, 2014

Staff News Writer

---

A pilot program aimed at preventing the development of diabetes among at-risk patients officially is underway in Indianapolis and the Twin Cities of Minnesota, setting the stage for improved outcomes around type 2 diabetes, a disease that is reaching epidemic proportions in the United States.

The AMA's partnership with the YMCA of the USA—part of the AMA's Improving Health Outcomes initiative—connects physicians with local YMCAs that offer an evidence-based diabetes prevention program. The goal is to create a support system for patients at risk of developing diabetes, then implement a feedback loop so physicians can integrate their patients' experiences at the YMCA into their care plans.

In the Hoosier state, the AMA is collaborating with the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis and IU Health Physicians, which represents 200 physicians. The YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities and United Family Medicine's Twin Cities branch, representing 23 physicians and 23 residents, will collaborate with the AMA in Minnesota.

These collaborations will increase screening of patients at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, promoting education and awareness about prediabetes. Physicians involved in this pilot also will refer patients who have prediabetes to the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, which is modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) evidence-based National Diabetes Prevention Program.

The program is based on research funded by the National Institutes of Health, which has shown a 58 percent reduction in the number of new cases of diabetes among adults with prediabetes overall, and a 71 percent reduction in new cases among those over age 60.

The program at the YMCA already is receiving positive feedback from participants.

“For years, I dealt with swollen feet, and my doctor would continuously say that I needed to lose weight,” said Marquita Glass, a participant in the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis Diabetes Prevention Program. “My doctor signed me up for the class and suggested I try to lose 15 to 20 pounds. I ended up loving the class, and the information I learned has become a natural part of my lifestyle.”

The first pilot location to be announced, Delaware, was unveiled in December. Four practices in the state are working with the AMA and the YMCA. The AMA expects to announce pilot sites in a fourth state in the coming months.

The pilot sites will work with the AMA to establish a process that ultimately will include best practices, a curriculum with collateral materials and tools for physicians.

“One out of every three Americans has prediabetes and only about 11 percent are even aware that they are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, which is why the AMA is committed to raising awareness and connecting physician practices to the YMCA’s DPP to help those at greatest risk prevent or delay diabetes,” AMA President Ardis Dee Hoven, MD, said in a news release.

As such programs continue to grow across the country, even more patients could be covered for participating in them. A new Medicare bill seeks to amend the Social Security Act to provide coverage for the CDC’s National Diabetes Prevention Program to eligible beneficiaries. A recent study estimates that, if adopted, the bill could reduce federal spending by \$1.3 billion over a decade while reducing the incidence of diabetes among seniors by more than one-third.