YMCA, physicians join to prevent diabetes in Florida community

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Physicians in a Florida community are getting help with screening patients for type 2 diabetes and improving outcomes around the disease.

St. Petersburg, a southwest Florida coastal town, is the fifth location to be announced in a collaborative pilot program taking place among physician practices, the YMCA of the USA and the AMA. Part of the AMA’s Improving Health Outcomes initiative, this pilot is exploring a process for physicians to screen patients for prediabetes, refer eligible patients to participate in the local YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program and receive feedback from the program to use in patients’ care plans.

An estimated one-third of adults in Pinellas County, where St. Petersburg is located, have prediabetes. Fortunately, local residents who receive Medicare benefits can attend the YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program at no cost.

“Diabetes prevention is vital to the future of medicine, and to the wellbeing of our patients,” said Miguel Faña Jr., MD, president of the Pinellas County Medical Association and a pilot participant. “Education is particularly important when combating this disease and the YMCA has been an invaluable resource for our community.”

Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) evidence-based National Diabetes Prevention Program, the YMCA lifestyle intervention program has been proven to help patients prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. To date, more than 650 participants have enrolled in the program in Pinellas County. Nationally, participants in the program achieve weight loss of about 6 percent, which significantly reduced their risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

The AMA pilot will establish a process for physicians to routinely screen for prediabetes, refer patients to the YMCA and receive updates to incorporate into their patients’ care plans. The AMA last month announced another southwest Florida pilot site, Venice. Other locations include the state of Delaware, Indianapolis and Minnesota’s Twin Cities.
Visit the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program website to find out whether an evidence-based diabetes prevention program is available in your community.