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North Carolina Becomes 10th State to Offer Diabetes Prevention Benefit

Public Health Issue

- Roughly 8 billion dollars of excess medical costs and lost productivity are attributable to diabetes in North Carolina (2012).
- Lifestyle change programs such as those that are part of the National Diabetes Prevention Program are evidence-based and can help people who have prediabetes and/or are at risk for diabetes cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent.
- Offering diabetes prevention lifestyle change programs as a covered benefit in an employee benefits package allows evidence-based diabetes prevention programs to be more accessible and affordable for health plan members.

Program Action

- A 2011 North Carolina Joint Legislative Taskforce on Diabetes Prevention and Awareness describes North Carolina's history and tradition of proactively addressing diabetes concerns as 'strong.'
- The state's [2011-15 Diabetes Strategic Plan](#) and [2013 Coordinated Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention State Plan](#) both emphasized the importance of action on prevention education. The North Carolina [Diabetes Advisory Council](#) has advocated for diabetes prevention measures since it was founded in 1988.
- The NC Department of Health and Human Services/Division of Public Health/ Community and Clinical Connections for Prevention and HealthBranch, NC State University and the North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees (State Health Plan) worked jointly to raise awareness of this proven strategy for diabetes prevention.
- The NC Division of Public Health calculated expected participation numbers and provided data on diabetes in North Carolina.
- A member of the state health plan board championed this prevention benefit prompting board action to begin funding this benefit.

Impact

- North Carolina is now the 10th state to provide an evidence-based diabetes prevention program as a covered benefit for teachers and state employees. The Diabetes Prevention Program delivered in North Carolina is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a lifestyle change program, meaning it meets certain standards—such as having trained lifestyle coaches and using a CDC-approved curriculum – to ensure the program is of high quality.
- As of May 1, 2016, an estimated 400,000 state employees and retirees will be eligible to participate in online lifestyle change classes implemented by Eat Smart, Move More, Prevent Diabetes or in-person classes offered by local providers in selected counties listed in the [CDC registry](#) of recognized organizations.
- The North Carolina State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees (State Health Plan) covers most of the cost of the 12-month, comprehensive program - \$429 – reducing the cost for eligible participants to just \$25. The self-funded State Health Plan requires eligible participants to attend at least 9 classes of the 22 classes in the two phases of the program to receive this benefit.
- NC State University and the NC Division of Public Health also launched [Diabetes Free NC](#) a website offering the CDC-Prediabetes Screening Test to help people understand their diabetes risk. Individuals who score a 9 or more are encouraged to consider participating in the Diabetes Prevention Program. Also, a convenient registration portal is available on the site.
- This new state health plan benefit successfully implements an employer diabetes prevention strategy from [North Carolina's Guide To Diabetes Prevention and Management 2015-2020](#) to "Offer diabetes prevention programs as a covered benefit."

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