

# North Carolina's Guide to Prevention and Management of Diabetes **3rd Edition**



## What Can Employers Do?



MANAGE WEIGHT | LIVE TOBACCO FREE | PARTICIPATE IN LIFESTYLE CHANGE PROGRAMS  
PARTICIPATE IN DIABETES EDUCATION | ENGAGE IN TREATMENT PLAN | GET ADEQUATE SLEEP

# What Can Employers Do?

Each year, the costs associated with diabetes, its complications, and related comorbidities continue to rise, imposing a significant financial burden. Beyond the profound impact on individuals and families, diabetes also affects the workplace. On average, individuals with diabetes incur medical expenses that are more than twice as high as those without the condition. In 2022, the economic burden of diabetes in the United States was estimated at \$412.9 billion, including over \$306 billion in direct medical costs and nearly \$106 billion in indirect costs.<sup>40</sup>

Employers are uniquely positioned to address diabetes through prevention, management education, and support for employees with

or at risk for diabetes. Given that employees spend a substantial portion of their lives at work, they are more likely to engage in health and nutrition education, as well as physical activity programs offered in the workplace. By partnering with employees to manage diabetes, employers can improve productivity, reduce health-related costs, and enhance both physical and mental well-being.

Employers of all sizes should collaborate with local and state agencies to support not only their own workforce but also the broader community. Engaging in diabetes prevention and management efforts across North Carolina can help reduce the risk of developing diabetes and provide support for those already living with the condition.

**Table 7: Activities for Employers**

Diabetes Primary Prevention	Diabetes Prevention for People at High Risk	Diabetes Management and Prevention of Complications
<p><b>To help manage weight and/or follow healthy eating guidelines</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Post full nutrition information in cafeterias.</li> <li>2. Offer healthful options within cafeterias and vending machines.</li> <li>3. Establish regular Farmer's Markets at the worksite.</li> <li>4. Provide educational/skill classes for healthy meal preparation.</li> <li>5. Offer the benefit of employee participation in virtual or in-person Diabetes Prevention Programs through their health insurance programs.</li> </ol> <p><b>To help manage weight and/or participate in regular physical activity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Subsidize gym memberships.</li> <li>2. Offer fitness centers or walking tracks on company property.</li> <li>3. Sponsor weight loss programs which include a prize related to health such as the purchase of activity trackers.</li> </ol>	<p><b>To help participation in diabetes prevention education programs/CDC recognized lifestyle change programs</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Offer the benefit of employee participation in virtual or in-person Diabetes Prevention Programs through their health insurance programs.</li> <li>2. Partner with a diabetes prevention program to offer classes at work.</li> <li>3. Create direct referral links between worksites and DSMES services.</li> <li>4. Offer on-site screening to identify employees with undiagnosed diabetes, prediabetes, and other risk factors.</li> <li>5. Provide incentives for milestone and/or completing the program.</li> </ol>	<p><b>To help participation in individual and/or group self-management education programs</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with health care providers, local public health, and community agencies to offer recognized Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) services at work.</li> <li>2. Partner with local specialists for pharmacy, podiatry, optometry, dental, and audiology (PPOD+A) care.</li> </ol> <p><b>To help persistence with personalized diabetes treatment plans</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Allow employees time off for diabetes screening and/or medical appointments without penalty.</li> <li>4. Offer wellness programs to assist in diabetes management. These may include programs to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Offer coverage of insulin at the minimal co-pay/month.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

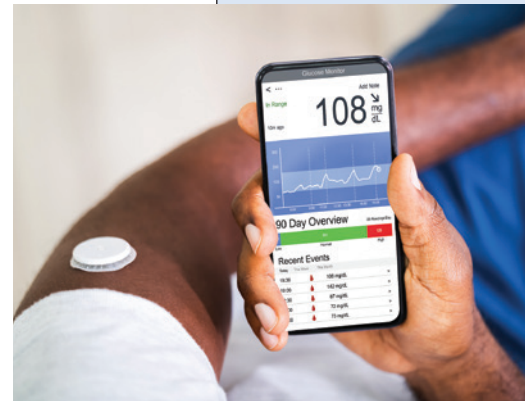
4. Promote stair climbing and walking at lunch.
5. Offer weight management programs as a covered benefit.
6. Offer the benefit of employee participation in virtual or in-person Diabetes Prevention Programs through their health insurance programs.

#### To help live tobacco free

1. Connect with Quitline and smoking cessation opportunities.
2. Offer insurance subsidies for non-smokers.

#### To promote adequate sleep

1. Establish at least 10 consecutive hours per day of protected time off-duty to allow workers to obtain no fewer than seven to eight hours of sleep.
2. Permit frequent brief rest breaks (e.g., every one to two hours) during mentally and physically demanding work, which are more effective against fatigue than a few longer breaks. Allow longer breaks for meals.
3. Schedule five eight-hour shifts or four 10-hour shifts per week, which are usually acceptable. Depending on the workload, 12-hour day shifts may be tolerated when interspersed with days off. During the evening and night, shorter shifts (e.g., eight hours) are better tolerated than longer shifts.
4. Examine work demands with respect to shift length. Twelve-hour shifts are more acceptable for “lighter” tasks (e.g., desk work).
5. Plan one to two full days of rest following five consecutive eight-hour shifts or four consecutive 10-hour shifts. Consider two rest days after three consecutive 12-hour shifts.
6. Provide training to inform workers of the challenges linked to shift work and long work hours and what resources are available to them to help with any difficulty they are having with their work schedule.
7. Examine close calls and incidents to determine the role, if any, of fatigue as a root cause or contributing cause to the incident.



- b. Offset the cost of medications for individuals.
- c. Offer premium reductions for people who maintain an A1C at their individualized goal.
- d. Offset costs of testing supplies and medications to assist in higher levels of self-management.
5. Offer health screenings at work, particularly on diabetes point days (e.g., Diabetes Alert Day, National Diabetes Month) including screenings for complications (eye, hearing, feet).
6. Cover insulin pumps as a co-pay instead of as durable medical equipment.
7. Offer refrigerators at work for insulin storage.
8. Ensure that your benefits package allows for similar co-pays on insulin pens and insulin vials.
9. Cover continuous glucose monitors for all people with diabetes, regardless of type of diabetes, as a co-pay instead of as durable medical equipment.
10. Avoid the use of restricted formularies as these tend to highly limit the medications available to people and tie the hands of health care professionals as to what may work best for the people being treated.



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