



Clinical-Community Linkages to Prevent Diabetes; A Collaboration between the American Medical Association and the Medical Society of Delaware

The Medical Society of Delaware (MSD) has entered into a collaboration with the American Medical Association (AMA) to reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes. This collaboration is part of the AMA's [Improving Health Outcomes](#) initiative. The AMA is creating and offering resources that can help physicians, care teams, and patients address prediabetes, the precursor to diabetes, by: screening patients using accurate measurements; taking action by referring patients at risk to evidence-based programs in communities; and engaging with the patient in shared decision-making and self-management. The AMA is focusing on the linkage between the physician practices and the local YMCA that offers the [Diabetes Prevention Program \(DPP\)](#) which is based on the [CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program](#).

MSD will contribute to these efforts by promoting the program through education events, communications, and also linking the program to the Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH) practices that we assist.

In the U.S., type 2 diabetes is one of the key drivers of soaring healthcare costs. An estimated 26 million Americans have diabetes and another 79 million Americans have prediabetes. In December, the AMA announced its collaboration with the YMCA of Delaware to create clinical-community linkages to help prevent diabetes, and reduce its associated suffering and costs, through the YMCA of Delaware's Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). As part of the partnership, multiple Delaware-based physician practices have agreed to screen patients, offer increased education and refer those found to be at highest risk of developing type 2 diabetes to this program in order to prevent more people from developing the disease. The Medical Society of Delaware's efforts are aimed at increasing the number of physicians who screen and refer people with prediabetes to the YMCA's DPP.

"One out of every three Americans has prediabetes and only about 11 percent of them are aware that they are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes," said Ardis Dee Hoven, M.D., president of the American Medical Association. "That 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 it."

The YMCA of Delaware is part of a 17 community demonstration project, funded by the federal government, to show that an evidence-based prevention program delivered by a community-based organization can lower incidence of type 2 diabetes and reduce medical costs incurred by Medicare. If successful, the program could become a model for how the nation's largest payer of health care claims reimburses community-based organizations as providers of evidence-based preventive services.

In these 17 communities, the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is being offered at no cost to qualifying Medicare enrollees. 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.

If you would like to be involved with the YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program, please contact Tricia Jefferson, RD, LDN at tjefferson@ymcade.org or 302-571-6998 for more information.