

# Changing the Way Diabetes is Treated With Information and Resources

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) is the leading federal government public education program that promotes diabetes prevention and control. Based on the scientific results of the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial,<sup>1</sup> NDEP was launched in 1997 with a mission to reduce the morbidity and mortality associated with diabetes.

To fulfill that mission, NDEP translates the latest science and disseminates the message that type 2 diabetes is serious, common, and costly, yet controllable and preventable. NDEP is jointly sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with the support of > 200 partner organizations.

Health care professionals need to know about current advances in diabetes management and prevention and require access to the most appropriate and effective tools and materials to assist them in administering the most effective care. NDEP provides a wealth of information and tools through three major campaigns:

- **Control Your Diabetes. For Life.** This is a comprehensive information campaign focusing on tips and strategies for effective diabetes management.
- **Be Smart About Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes.** This emphasizes the link between diabetes and cardiovascular disease.
- **Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes.** This is the first national diabetes prevention effort.

In view of the spiraling epidemic of diabetes in the young, NDEP is responding to the needs of children and adolescents with diabetes on several fronts. The NDEP website has a critically important overview of all of the issues emerging for children and diabetes, especially type 2 diabetes. This one-of-a-kind overview compels its audiences to action.

NDEP has also developed "Helping the Student With Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel." This comprehensive guide for managing diabetes at school reflects a consensus from a broad spectrum of federal agencies and organizations regarding how schools can provide a safe learning environment and equal access to educational opportunities for all students. It lays out a team approach to diabetes management in schools and outlines the roles and responsibilities of school personnel.

In addition, NDEP has developed a popular series of easy-to-read tip sheets for children with type 2 diabetes. These are some of the first available tools to share with children dealing with a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

In recognition of the fact that diabetes disproportionately affects several special populations, many NDEP campaign materials and tools have been adapted for high-risk audiences, including older adults, African Americans, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. They have also been translated into Spanish and 15 Asian and Pacific-Islander languages.

Health care provider tools and materials from the campaigns include:

- **Feet Can Last a Lifetime.** This comprehensive kit contains ready-to-use foot exam forms, Medicare certification forms for therapeutic footwear, a sample disposable sensory testing monofilament, reproducible patient education materials, and current resource and reference materials.
- **GAMEPLAN Tool Kit.** This comprehensive kit includes evidence-based information for identifying people at risk for diabetes and lays out a lifestyle change program to help patients prevent diabetes. Each kit includes reproducible patient education handouts, as well as two sets of the GAMEPLAN booklets for patients.
- **Diabetes Numbers-at-a-Glance Card.** This quick-reference pocket guide for health care providers lists criteria for diagnosing pre-diabetes and diabetes as well as for treating people with diabetes.
- **Guiding Principles for Diabetes Care.** Expanding on the quick reference card, this overview of the essential components of quality diabetes care for people with pre-diabetes or diabetes and their families is a key tool for health care professionals and insurers.
- **Working Together to Manage Diabetes: A Guide for Pharmacists, Podiatrists, Optometrists, and Dental Professionals.** This interdisciplinary primer focuses on diabetes-related conditions affecting the foot, eye, and mouth, as well as issues related to drug therapy management. The primer promotes a team approach to comprehensive diabetes care and provides simple care recom-

mendations to providers in making cross-disciplinary treatment referrals.

NDEP also provides the following additional key websites:

- **www.BetterDiabetesCare.nih.gov**  
Many argue that we cannot change the way diabetes is treated until we change the health care system. This comprehensive website has information and tools to make effective systems changes in the way diabetes is diagnosed, treated, and prevented. Continuing education credit for doing self-directed research on this site will be available soon.
- **www.DiabetesAtWork.org**  
This is a comprehensive website to assess the impact of diabetes in the workplace and to help employees with diabetes. The site contains a complete package of tools to create and implement an education program on diabetes prevention and control.

The results of NDEP’s public education campaigns have been powerful. Broadcast public service announcements (PSAs) using donated airtime have matched a \$30 million commercial advertising buy. Print PSAs have reached > 53 million people (Figure 1). News coverage has reached > 1 billion people over 7 years. With the help of NDEP media outreach, diabetes has become a much more common magazine cover story. And the outreach has paid off; > 2 million consumers have requested material, and > 350,000 sets of information for health care professionals have been distributed.

In addition to tracking outreach, NDEP is at work to track outcomes. Although much more clearly needs to be done to improve diabetes care in the United States, two numbers reflect the potential impact of NDEP.

- First, public opinion surveys in three successive years showed that ~ 50% of people with diabetes recognize NDEP’s core message, “Control Your Diabetes. For Life.” introduced in 1998<sup>2</sup> (Figure 2).

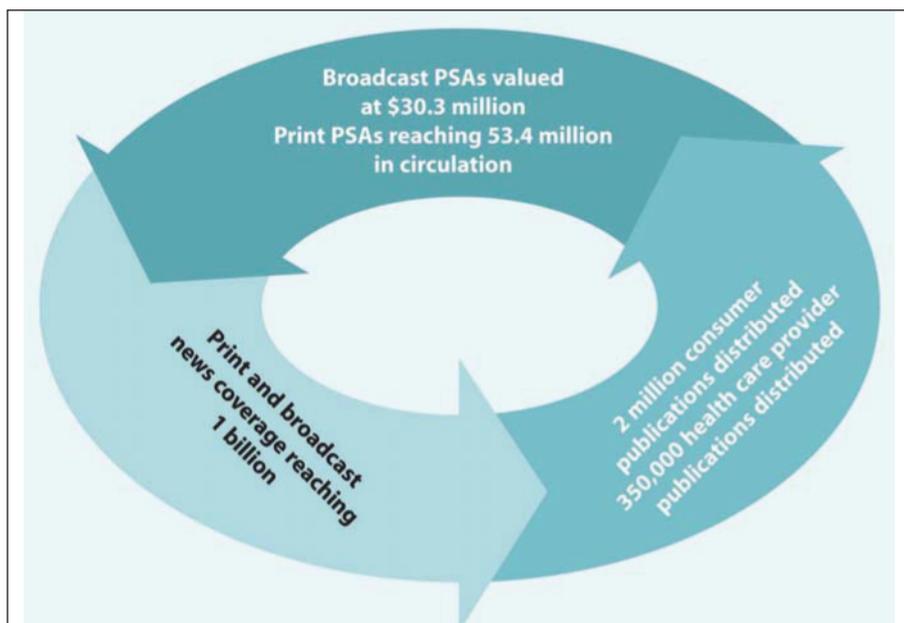


Figure 1. Results of NDEP media education programs

- Second, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey shows a dramatic improvement in blood glucose testing among people with diabetes between 1997 and 2002, with 39% of people with diabetes testing at least once a day in 1997 and 55% testing at least once a day in 2002<sup>3</sup> (Figure 3). This increase holds across

all ethnic groups, reflecting effective outreach to high-risk audiences. Hemoglobin A<sub>1c</sub> values are lagging behind, but the right actions are being taken by many people with diabetes.

A visit to the NDEP website, [www.ndep.nih.gov](http://www.ndep.nih.gov), allows access to downloadable copies of patient tools and

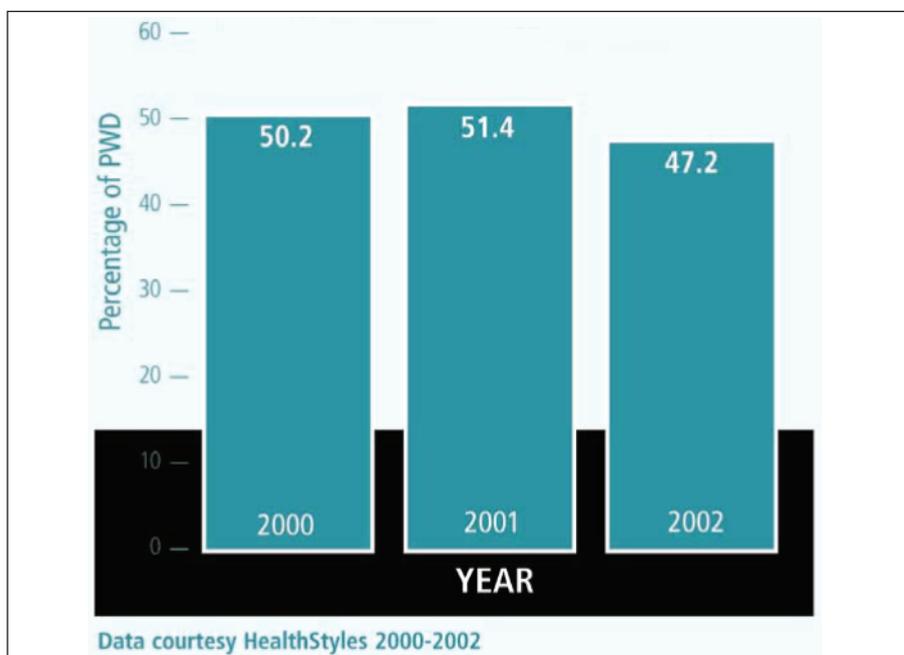
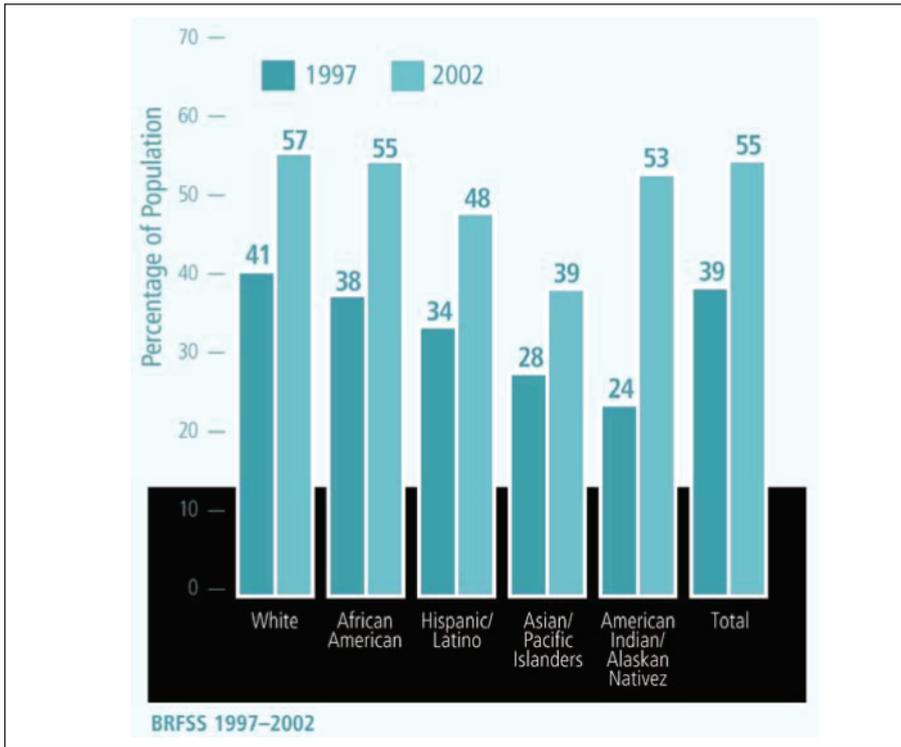


Figure 2. Percentage of people with diabetes who have seen the message “Control Your Diabetes. For Life.”



**Figure 3. Percentage of people with diabetes who check their blood glucose at least once a day (by race/ethnicity).**

materials, as well as the more comprehensive resources for health professionals. All NDEP materials are copyright free. Materials may also be ordered by calling NDEP at 800-438-5383.

**REFERENCES**

<sup>1</sup>The DCCT Research Group: The effect of intensive treatment of diabetes on the development and progression of long-term complications in insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus. *N Engl J Med* 329:977-986, 1993

<sup>2</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: HealthStyles Survey, 2002 [article online]. Available from [www.cdc.diabetes.gov](http://www.cdc.diabetes.gov)

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 1997-2002 [article online]. Available from [www.cdc.brfss.gov](http://www.cdc.brfss.gov)

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