

# Tipping the Scales Against Diabetes, Pre-Diabetes and Obesity in the U.S.



UnitedHealth Group®

## DIABETES PREVENTION AND CONTROL ALLIANCE KEY FACTS

### WHAT Is the Diabetes Prevention and Control Alliance?

- UnitedHealth Group is launching the Diabetes Prevention and Control Alliance, a partnership with YMCA of the USA and Walgreens, aimed at tipping the scales against the epidemic of diabetes, pre-diabetes, and obesity in the U.S.
- The Diabetes Prevention and Control Alliance is anchored by two innovative programs including the Diabetes Prevention Program, which is designed to help people at risk for diabetes prevent the disease through healthy eating, increased activity, and other lifestyle changes, and the Diabetes Control Program, which will help people with diabetes better control their condition through education and support from trained pharmacists. UnitedHealth Group will cover these services at no charge to plan participants enrolled in employer-provided health insurance plans, marking the first time in the country that a health plan will pay for evidence-based diabetes prevention and control programs.
- Both programs have been tested through controlled trials or pilot projects with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), YMCA of the USA, Indiana University, clinical centers, employers and retail pharmacies. There is substantial evidence that supports early and aggressive intervention to help people avoid the health and financial toll of diabetes.

### WHY Is This Campaign Being Launched?

- There were 24 million Americans with diabetes in 2007, with an alarming 24% of them undiagnosed<sup>1</sup>. More than 90% have the more common form of the disease, called type 2 diabetes.
- Another 57 million Americans -- 26% of the adult population -- are considered pre-diabetic, with 85% unaware of their condition. The vast majority of these people struggle with obesity.
- One of every five health care dollars is spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes. The estimated cost of the disease has increased 32% -- or \$8 billion a year -- since 2002, reaching \$174 billion in 2007.
- Type 2 diabetes is largely preventable and for those who have been diagnosed, it can be controlled. Evidence shows that early, aggressive intervention mitigates its enormous health and financial toll.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

## **HOW Is the Alliance Unique from Other Diabetes Support Programs?**

- UnitedHealth Group will cover these services through its health insurance plans, marking the first time in the U.S. that a health plan will pay for evidence-based diabetes prevention and control programs.
- The services provided by both programs are *free* for eligible individuals enrolled in employer-provided health insurance plans.
- Results-based incentives will help drive performance. For example, a YMCA lifestyle coach will receive a higher payment for helping an individual achieve greater weight loss, as well as reimbursement for each patient's participation.
- Advanced health plan swipe-card technology introduced by UnitedHealth Group will enable Walgreens to process payments at the point of service and be paid within 24 hours. The YMCA also will be paid automatically through a paperless system, using an innovative UnitedHealth Group tool.
  - Data from the pilot projects show convincingly that paying for these services works: people get and stay healthier, which can lead to dramatically lower health care costs for employers and the health care system, due to fewer doctor and hospital visits.

## **HOW Does the Diabetes Prevention Program Work?**

- The Diabetes Prevention Program addresses the link between obesity and diabetes. The program uses a group-based lifestyle intervention designed especially for people at high risk of developing diabetes. In a group setting, a trained lifestyle coach helps participants change their lifestyle by helping people eat healthier and increase their physical activity, and learn about other behavior modifications over the 16-session program. After the initial 16 core sessions, participants meet monthly for added support to help them maintain their progress.
- The Diabetes Prevention Program is based on the original U.S. Diabetes Prevention Program, funded by the NIH and CDC, which showed that with lifestyle changes and modest weight reduction, a person with pre-diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by 58%.
- Researchers at Indiana University School of Medicine were able to replicate the successful results of the National Diabetes Prevention Program in conjunction with the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis in a group setting. The Alliance will now enable the program to expand to many more communities across the nation.

## **HOW Does the Diabetes Control Program Work?**

- The Diabetes Control Program (DCP) provides access for people with diabetes to local pharmacists who are trained to help them manage their condition and improve their adherence to their physicians' treatment plans.
  - This role for community-based pharmacists is consistent with well-recognized NIH and CDC guidelines.

- Retail pharmacists, beginning with Walgreens, will support primary care physicians to provide continuous, supportive, and aggressive care for people with diabetes by assisting patients with education and behavioral intervention, risk factor reduction and health promotion.
  - Every percentage point drop in HbA1c levels, a commonly used blood test to monitor blood sugar control over a three-month period, reduces the risk of diabetic complications by 40%.

### **WHO Can Access the Program?**

- The Diabetes Prevention and Control Alliance will launch in April 2010 and will roll out nationally through 2011 and 2012.
  - The program will be available initially in six markets in four states: Phoenix, AZ; Indianapolis, IN; Cincinnati, Columbus and Dayton, OH; and Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN.
  - Early 2011 market roll-outs include the New York City metro area of NY and NJ; and Tucson, AZ.
- The programs will be available to self-insured health plan customers and their family members with diabetes or pre-diabetes.\* UnitedHealth Group also is rolling out the programs to fully-insured customers in 2010 launch markets and considering future expansion to fully-insured customers in other markets.
- UnitedHealth Group employees will have access to the programs as they roll out in each market.
- In addition, UnitedHealth Group has entered into an agreement with Minnesota-based health insurer Medica to offer the programs to a wide range of the company's employer-sponsored plans in Minnesota.
- The Alliance programs will be available to other insurance companies and employers as well.
- To learn more, visit [www.unitedhealthgroup.com](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com).

*\* Self-insured plans generally are used only by larger employers, with claims administered by an insurance company. In these programs, the employer funds covered health care costs for participating employees and family members.*