

# Tipping the Scales against Diabetes, Prediabetes and Obesity in the U.S.



UnitedHealth Group®

## Diabetes and Obesity: The Alarming Facts

### The Epidemic of Diabetes, Prediabetes and Obesity in the U.S.

- Diabetes currently affects about 27 million Americans and is one of the fastest-growing diseases in the nation.<sup>i</sup>
- Diabetes is closely linked with obesity. In fact, if current obesity trends remain the same, by 2050, up to one-third of adult Americans could have diabetes.<sup>ii</sup>
- Within the next 40 years, the prevalence of diabetes in the U.S. will increase from one in 10 adults currently to as many as one in three.<sup>2</sup>
- Every 24 hours, more than 4,000 adults are diagnosed with diabetes and approximately 200 people die from the disease.<sup>iii</sup>
- The risk of death among people with diabetes is about twice as high as it is for people of similar ages without diabetes.<sup>iv</sup>
- Sixty seven million Americans are estimated to have prediabetes, meaning they are at grave risk of developing diabetes.<sup>v</sup>
- Obesity rates have increased by 130% in the past 20 years.<sup>vi</sup>
- Currently, more than one-third of American adults – more than 72 million people – and 17% of children in the U.S. are obese – and more than two-thirds of the adult population were either overweight or obese in 2008 – placing them at heightened risk for developing diabetes.<sup>vii, viii</sup>

### Minority Populations are Especially at Risk

- National data from 2006-2008 found blacks had a 51% higher prevalence of obesity, and Hispanics had a 21% higher prevalence of obesity compared with non-Hispanic whites.<sup>ix</sup>
- Compared to the general population, blacks and Hispanics are disproportionately affected by, and suffer complications from, uncontrolled diabetes.
  - Blacks are 1.8 times more likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.<sup>x</sup>

- Blacks are 2.7 times more likely to suffer from lower-limb amputations, and almost 50% more likely to develop diabetic retinopathy (eye disease) than non-Hispanic whites.<sup>xi</sup>
- In recent studies, Hispanics were found to be 1.5 times more likely than non-Hispanic whites to die from diabetes.<sup>xii</sup>

## **Devastating Health and Financial Consequences for Our Country**

- More than half of Americans could have diabetes or prediabetes by 2020 at a cost of \$3.35 trillion over the next decade.<sup>xiii</sup>
- One of every five health care dollars is spent caring for someone with diagnosed diabetes.
- If current trends continue, the new estimates show that diabetes and prediabetes will account for an estimated 10 percent of total health care spending by the end of the decade at an annual cost of almost \$500 billion – up from an estimated \$194 billion this year<sup>xiv</sup>.
- The medical costs related to obesity reached an estimated \$147 billion in 2008.<sup>xv</sup> Between 1987 and 2001, diseases associated with obesity accounted for 27% of the increase in medical costs.<sup>xvi</sup>

## **Together, We Can Tip the Scales against Diabetes and Obesity**

- If proven, real-world programs to prevent and control diabetes are adopted broadly and scaled nationally, our country could improve health and life expectancy and save up to \$250 billion net over the next 10 years.
- At least one fourth of U.S. adults are known to have prediabetes, though only about 4% have been informed of their condition.<sup>xvii</sup>
- Only about half of those with prediabetes said they had tried to lose weight or boost their exercise level in the preceding year, according to a recent study.<sup>xviii</sup>
- The good news is that progression to diabetes is not inevitable for people with prediabetes. Weight control and good nutrition can play a large role in helping to prevent diabetes for this at-risk group.<sup>xix</sup>
- A person with prediabetes who reduces body weight by at least 5% by adopting better eating habits or walking 150 minutes per week reduces his or her risk of developing diabetes by 58%.<sup>xx</sup>

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- <sup>i</sup> The UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization: "The United States of Diabetes: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead," November, 2010.
- <sup>ii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Projection of the year 2050 burden of diabetes in the US adult population: dynamic modeling of incidence, mortality, and prediabetes prevalence," by James P Boyle, Theodore J Thompson, Edward W Gregg, Lawrence E Barker and David F Williamson (appeared in *Population Health Metrics* , October 22, 2010).
- <sup>iii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "November is American Diabetes Month," 2009 (<http://www.cdc.gov/features/livingwithdiabetes/>).
- <sup>iv</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Diabetes Fact Sheet, 2007.
- <sup>v</sup> The UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization: "The United States of Diabetes: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead," November, 2010.
- <sup>vi</sup> America's Health Rankings, 2009.
- <sup>vii</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Obesity: Halting the Epidemic by Making Health Easier: a Glance at 2010."
- <sup>viii</sup> National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey," 2010
- <sup>ix</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "Differences in prevalence of obesity among black, white, and Hispanic adults — United States," 2006–2008.
- <sup>x</sup> American Diabetes Association (<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/african-americans-and-complications.html>).
- <sup>xi</sup> The American Diabetes Association: "Living with diabetes" (<http://www.diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/complications/african-americans-and-complications.html>).
- <sup>xii</sup> The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; the Office of Minority Health (<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/content.aspx?lvl=2&lvlID=54&ID=3324>).
- <sup>xiii</sup> The UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization: "The United States of Diabetes: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead," November, 2010.
- <sup>xiv</sup> The UnitedHealth Center for Health Reform & Modernization: "The United States of Diabetes: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead," November, 2010.
- <sup>xv</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "Highest rates of obesity, diabetes in the South, Appalachia, and some tribal lands"
- <sup>xvi</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "A free resource for worksites from the CDC."
- <sup>xvii</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "Self-reported prediabetes and risk-reduction activities --- United States, 2006."
- <sup>xviii</sup> "Diabetes Risk Reduction Behaviors Among U.S. Adults with Prediabetes"; Linda S. Geiss, MA, Cherie James, MSPH, Edward W. Gregg, PhD, Ann Albright, PhD, RD, David F. Williamson, PhD, and Catherine C. Cowie, PhD. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Volume 38, Issue 4 (April 2010).
- <sup>xix</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "2007 National Diabetes Factsheet."
- <sup>xx</sup> Center for Disease Control and Prevention: "Self-reported prediabetes and risk-reduction activities --- United States, 2006."