

Diabetes Prevention Program Highlighted in Delaware

CDC Director Thomas Frieden joins Delaware stakeholders at roundtable discussion.

WILMINGTON, Del. – Today, the YMCA of Delaware convened a group of state and national leaders, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Thomas Frieden, Governor Jack Markell and U.S. Representative John Carney (D-Del.) at a roundtable discussion in Wilmington to discuss the impact of type 2 diabetes in Delaware and across the nation and how the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is helping to reduce diabetes rates nationwide at the Central Downtown YMCA.

At the event, YMCA of the USA and the YMCA of Delaware highlighted the good work Delaware is doing to prevent type 2 Diabetes, and highlighted Sen. Tom Carper's (D-Del.) efforts to prevent diabetes and encourage Medicare and Medicaid coverage of evidence-based diabetes prevention programs like the Y's.

"It's going to take a coordinated approach where the public and private sector work with community-based organizations like the Y to reduce its impact," said Matt Longjohn, MD. MPH, YMCA of the USA's National Health Officer. "The Y thanks Senator Carper for his support in working to ensure coverage of this important program. Ys nationwide look forward to working with Congress, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others to make this program accessible to as many people as possible."

Other participants included Delaware Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf; Delaware Public Health Director Dr. Karyl Rattay; Dr. Michael Rosenthal, Chair of Family and Community Medicine at Christiana Care Health

System; Dr. Stephen Permut, American Medical Association Board of Trustees; representatives from YMCA of the USA and participants from the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program.

The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, which is part of the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program, helps adults at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes reduce their risk for developing the disease by taking steps that will improve their overall health and well-being. Research by the National Institutes of Health has shown that programs like the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program can reduce the number of new cases of type 2 diabetes by 58 percent, and 71 percent in adults over the age of 60.

“We are pleased that the YMCA in Delaware's success and progress with the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, coupled with Senator Carper's advocacy, made the YMCA of Delaware a focal point for this critical national issue,” said Deborah Bagatta-Bowles, CEO of the YMCA in Delaware.

The YMCA of Delaware is part of a 17 community demonstration project 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 Y is offering the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention at no cost to 10,000 qualifying Medicare enrollees over the next three years. The initiative is expected to save Medicare an estimated \$4.2 million over three years and \$53 million over six years. The project is funded through a Health Care Innovation Award from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI).

Senator Carper recently supported coverage of programs that

are part of the CDC's National Diabetes Prevention Program by Medicare and Medicaid by offering an amendment to a bill repealing and replacing the current Medicare physician payments system so that physician payment rates are not subject to annual cuts. The amendment was withdrawn in exchange for a commitment by the Congressional Budget Office to prioritize scoring the potential cost-savings to Medicare and Medicaid of diabetes prevention programs like the Y's.

While the amendment was not ultimately voted on, the Senator's effort builds bi-partisan support for the program with his Senate colleagues and may help to pave the way for eventual passage.

"We all know that obesity and diabetes are two of the main drivers of poor health and increasing health care costs in our country," Sen. Carper said. "If we do not rein in the growth of obesity and diabetes, this may be the first generation of Americans with a shorter life span than earlier generations.

To get this epidemic under control, we need to ensure that we are supporting a full range of therapies and programs, like the YMCA's program, that might help lower our country's obesity rates and better prevent chronic diseases like diabetes."

Over the past several years, the Y has worked with CDC to expand the National Diabetes Prevention Program. Currently, the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is offered in more than 700 locations in 39 states

"Prevention is critical to reducing the nation's healthcare costs and helping people live longer, more productive lives," said Congressman Carney. "Eating healthier and getting more physical activity greatly reduces someone's risk of developing diabetes and many other chronic diseases. The key is getting people the information early and providing them with the support to make real progress. We had a good discussion, and I'm looking forward to continuing our work with both state and national partners to help Delawareans fight this disease."

“We know that we can be effective in preventing diabetes for people at high risk by helping them make lifestyle changes, including improved nutrition, increased physical activity and weight loss,” said Governor Jack Markell. “The National Diabetes Prevention Program provides another opportunity to help make Delaware a safer and healthier place, building on efforts like our improved trails for walking or biking, and our smoking ban on state property.”

“Today, about 70,000 Delawareans are living with diabetes, with the trend rising dramatically from 7.6 percent of Delaware adults in 2003 to 9.6 percent in 2012,” Delaware Health and Social Services Secretary Rita Landgraf said. “This reality, coupled with the fact that Delaware’s population is aging faster than that of the nation as a whole, makes it even more critical that we find ways to prevent and control diabetes in Delaware.”

By 2030, one-third of Delaware residents will be 60 or older and the state also is projected to have the ninth-highest proportion of people age 65 and older among all states.

“We must focus more on prevention and on healthy lifestyles throughout the lifespan,” said Dr. Karyl Rattay. “Starting with young children and educating them on healthy eating and physical activity, and evolving the supports throughout their lifetime.”

The Y is committed to making the program available to everyone who meets program criteria in communities offering the program and is working with CDC and others to bring more payers and program providers to the table. To date, more than 15,000 individuals have completed or attended at least one session of the program, and participants have attained an average of nearly 5 percent weight loss.