

Medicaid MCOs Embrace YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program

NEW CASTLE (Aug. 1, 2019) – As a way to improve the health of Delawareans who are covered by Medicaid, while potentially reducing overall health care spending, the Department of Health and Social Services' two Medicaid managed care organizations are making the [YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program](#) available to their members who meet eligibility criteria.

The program is available at no cost to adult members of DHSS' Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance two managed care organizations (MCOs) – Highmark Health Options and AmeriHealth Caritas Delaware – who meet the program's eligibility criteria. To participate, MCO members must be 18 or older, overweight with a body mass index (BMI) over 25 and be diagnosed with prediabetes or have a previous diagnosis of prediabetes. YMCA of Delaware membership is not required.

✘ “Unfortunately, obesity and diabetes are twin epidemics in our state,” said DHSS Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker, a practicing family physician. “I thank Highmark and AmeriHealth Caritas for making the YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program available at no cost to Medicaid MCO clients who meet the eligibility criteria. This is an important step forward in reducing the impact of obesity and diabetes, while helping us to build a healthier Delaware.”

Across the state, about two-thirds of Delaware adults are at an unhealthy weight, either overweight or obese. In 2017, 11.3 percent of Delaware residents age 18 and older reported they had been diagnosed with diabetes and an additional 12.2 percent reported being told they have pre-diabetes.

“Highmark Health Options is proud to partner with DHSS and the

YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program as we work together to reduce obesity and chronic disease,” said Todd Graham, President and CEO for Highmark Health Options. “We look forward to this partnership that will lead to a healthier lifestyle for our members while supporting the My Healthy Weight pledge.”

“We are very pleased to be a part of the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program, alongside the Department of Health and Social Services, Highmark Health Options, and our valued community partner, the YMCA of Delaware, to help reduce the life-threatening chronic conditions caused by diabetes,” said Emmilyn Lawson, CEO of AmeriHealth Caritas Delaware. “Through this complimentary community-based program, we hope to nurture healthy citizens and healthier communities by increasing access to the support and services that Delawareans need to achieve their wellness goals.”

The YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program is a yearlong, evidence-based health behavior change program consisting of 25 one-hour group sessions. A trained lifestyle coach helps participants learn skills and strategies to eat healthier, increase physical activity, lose weight, overcome stress, stay motivated and more. The goals of the program are to reduce participants’ body weight by 7 percent and increase physical activity by 150 minutes per week.

“We have offered the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program about 10 years, we’ve seen tremendous results, and will now be able to reach even more people in need,” said Tricia Jefferson, RD, LDN, Director of Program Development and Partnerships for the YMCA of Delaware. “Partnering with both Managed Care Organizations to serve our Medicaid-eligible participants will not only help us further prevent diabetes in a population that is at great risk, but it will help shape the future of how prevention programs are delivered and paid for across the nation.”

“We are grateful to Highmark, AmeriHealth Caritas, and the

YMCA for their partnership in offering an evidence-based program to address obesity and related chronic disease for eligible Medicaid enrollees,” said Steve Groff, Director of DHSS’ Division of Medicaid and Medical Assistance. “DHSS was one of nine founding members of My Healthy Weight, a national collective initiative offering obesity prevention and treatment. The Diabetes Prevention Program will fulfill our pledge to provide access to community-based programs.”

To learn more about your eligibility for the YMCA’s Diabetes Prevention Program, contact your managed care organization.

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The Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of life of Delaware’s citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.