

# First-Ever State Funding in California for the

## DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

**A CALIFORNIA FIRST!** California made its first-ever investment in diabetes prevention by funding a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-approved program that has proven effective in preventing or delaying type 2 diabetes, which, without intervention is expected to grow by 80 percent in California over next five years. The Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) will become a covered Medi-Cal service on July 1, 2018, with an annual \$5 million allocation from the state general fund.

**UNPRECEDENTED LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT:** This Diabetes Prevention Program enjoyed uncharacteristic support as a late addition to the 2017 state budget. Sub-committee Chair Dr. Joaquin Arambula championed its inclusion in the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health, where it was unanimously approved before moving on to the Senate and Assembly floors, where it also won unanimous bipartisan support. Passage of budget trailer bill SB 97 on June 22, 2017 was the next hurdle, followed by the governor's approval of the state budget and signature on the trailer bill on July 10, 2017.

**ADDRESSING A CRISIS:** California is facing a diabetes epidemic of almost unimaginable proportions. The majority (55 percent) of California adults, and almost one quarter (23 percent) of teens, now have either type 2 diabetes or prediabetes. In the next five years, 1.9 million more Californians are expected to be diagnosed with diabetes, costing California an additional \$15 billion in annual health care costs. Tragically, the burden of diabetes falls overwhelmingly on low-income communities, and much of the cost of increasing diabetes rates will be paid by Medi-Cal. Studies have shown that the program saves \$2,650 in healthcare costs in the first 15 months. By funding the Diabetes Prevention Program, Medi-Cal can expect savings of over \$45 million each year in reduced medical costs, almost four times the cost of the program.

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**DPP will save \$45 million annually in Medi-Cal costs – nearly 4 times the cost of the program.**

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And while health care cost savings are often highlighted as the primary benefit of the DPP, those savings are driven by a more important outcome: measurable and impactful improvements in the health status of the participants.

**A PROVEN PREVENTION PROGRAM:** The Diabetes Prevention Program enrolls people who have prediabetes into a low-cost lifestyle change program that is designed to be administered outside of the traditional health care setting. To be eligible, a person must not have been previously diagnosed with diabetes, must be at least 18 years of age, have a body mass index of at least 25 and have either a hemoglobin A1c value between 5.7 and 6.4 percent or experienced gestational diabetes during pregnancy. Led by trained peer coaches, the program helps people lose 5 to 7 percent of their body weight through healthier eating and physical activity, which lowers participants' risk of developing type 2 diabetes by two-thirds. Participants lower their risk for other diet-related chronic conditions as well.

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In-person sessions are meant to be provided by trained coaches, community health workers and promotores because they are most able to support lifestyle changes in ways that are most culturally and linguistically meaningful. In addition to in-person sessions, DPP may include virtual support elements.



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## LEVERAGING EARLIER EFFORTS:

Since 2014, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) has coordinated the national effort to expand the use of CDC-recognized lifestyle change programs for diabetes prevention. Among their strategic priorities has been a goal of increasing insurance coverage for the DPP in Medicaid, Medicare and employee health benefits plans. In September 2015, the CDC, American Medical Association and NACDD hosted the “Prevent Diabetes STAT™: California” meeting in Los Angeles to assist the California Department of Public Health with developing an action plan to scale up the Diabetes Prevention Program in California. During the meeting, a work group was established to promote coverage for DPP in Medi-Cal and Medicare health plans.

The federal government agreed to include DPP coverage through Medicare in 2016 (coverage beginning in 2018). CalPERS agreed to cover DPP for state employees and retirees beginning January 2017. Likewise, a growing number of private insurers are also covering DPP. Medi-Cal recipients, among those at highest risk for diabetes, were left as the only group not to have DPP as a covered insurance benefit.

If federal matching funds are approved next year by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, California will become the third state to provide the Diabetes Prevention Program as a Medicaid benefit, following only Montana and Minnesota.

**PARTNERING FOR PROGRESS:** In California, Public Health Advocates began working with a coalition of partners to understand prediabetes rates statewide and identify prevention opportunities. With funding from the California HealthCare Foundation and The California Endowment, we partnered with the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the CDC to estimate the prevalence of prediabetes in California by city, county and legislative district. When the report was released in early 2016, it received front page coverage in most major California newspapers. Policy recommendations were developed by a national panel of experts, with one such recommendation being Medi-Cal funding for the Diabetes Prevention Program. The research findings and recommendations were presented to state legislators, including the Assembly Budget Subcommittee chair, Dr. Joaquin Arambula, who then championed DPP coverage in the budget this year.

**BUILDING A COALITION:** The coalition of partners that were integral in providing momentum, support and technical assistance in this effort include:

- » AltaMed Health Services
- » American Diabetes Association
- » American Heart Association/American Stroke Association
- » Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment Advocacy and Leadership
- » Boehringer-Ingelheim
- » California Department of Public Health
- » California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- » California State Alliance of YMCAs
- » California State University, Monterey Bay faculty
- » Health Plus Advocates
- » Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
- » National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
- » Novo Nordisk
- » Public Health Institute
- » Roots of Change
- » Sanofi
- » Social Justice Learning Institute
- » Touro University faculty
- » Visión y Compromiso

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*Public Health Advocates, formerly the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA), is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that raises awareness about critical health disparities and mobilizes communities to promote the establishment of state and local health policies to promote health and health equity.*

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## STEPS TO SUCCESS

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1. Identified the problem and associated costs
  2. Determined best policy approach
  3. Leveraged existing successes and examples
  4. Found legislative champions
  5. Partnered with key organizations for advocacy
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