

# A Healthier Indiana

## Diabetes Prevention, Diagnosis and Management

By Ed Pienkosz

**D**iabetes imposes a staggering medical and financial toll. New research from the American Diabetes Association shows the total cost of diabetes was \$245 billion in 2012 – an increase of 41% from the \$174 billion spent in 2007. Type 2 diabetes has become more than a mere health concern; it's a growing epidemic.

Dr. David Marrero, vice president of the American Diabetes Association and professor of medicine at the Indiana University School of Medicine, isn't surprised by the growing cost of diabetes in the United States. But he is alarmed by the sheer volume of Americans who have this preventable, chronic condition.

"Diabetes is a serious and life-threatening disease that has reached epidemic proportions in the United States," Marrero says. "It's a dangerous disease that can quickly rob individuals of their health and quality of life and is the seventh leading cause of death."

Nearly 26 million people – 8.3% of the U.S. population – have diabetes. An estimated 79 million people have pre-diabetes, placing them at an increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Altogether, that's one in every four Americans.

"If the current trend continues, one in three American adults will have diabetes by 2050," Marrero notes. "These numbers highlight the critical need to address this epidemic, educate communities across the country and make diabetes a national priority."

### All about prevention

An expert in the field of clinical trials in diabetes and translation research, Marrero tirelessly promotes diabetes education and prevention. He helped design the Diabetes Prevention Program, a major clinical research study aimed at discovering whether modest weight loss through dietary changes and increased physical activity could prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes.

Viridian Health Management delivers the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Diabetes Prevention Program as a key implementation contractor across the country. The National Diabetes Prevention Program is based on the Diabetes Prevention Program research study. Results of this study demonstrated that lifestyle intervention to lose weight and increase physical activity reduced the development of type 2 diabetes by 58% during a three-year period.

The National Diabetes Prevention Program is the nation's

foremost evidence-based program for the prevention of type 2 diabetes. Engaging and educating people on physical activity, healthy eating, weight loss, stress management and diabetes risk factors can make a difference. Nationwide implementation of the National Diabetes Prevention Program could save \$5.7 billion and prevent 885,000 cases of type 2 diabetes.

The distressing rate of diabetes is due to several factors, but is fueled in large part by the obesity epidemic, increasingly sedentary lifestyles and poor diets. Being overweight or obese is a major risk factor for type 2 diabetes, according to the CDC.

### Troubling numbers

The state of Indiana has not been untouched by this nationwide health crisis. The 2013 American Fitness Index, published by the American College of Sports Medicine, recently ranked the 50 largest cities/metro areas on their fitness levels. Indianapolis, unfortunately, is close to the bottom of the list, ranking 45 out of 50.

In the state of Indiana, diabetes statistics are alarming:

- 9.6% of adults have been diagnosed with diabetes
- 26% of Indiana's population has pre-diabetes
- 63.5% of adults (4,009,085) are overweight or obese
- More than 86.3% of adults with type 2 diabetes are overweight or obese

"Some of the best defenses to prevent type 2 diabetes are a healthy diet, 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity and a 5% to 10% reduction in body weight," Marrero says.

Educating the general public on the daily preventive steps and collaboration between public health and medical professionals will help lower the rate of diabetes. It's the most effective way of preventing the growth of this epidemic.



Ed Pienkosz

### INFORMATION LINK

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