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Diabetes Self-Management Key to Healthier Living with Diabetes *Nov. 14 is World Diabetes Day*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Nov. 10, 2016)— More than 611,000 Kentucky adults, or about 13 percent of the state's total population is now estimated to have diabetes. Of those, about 150,000 don't even realize they have the disease. The Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), is using World Diabetes Day on November 14 as a time to bring awareness to diabetes.

DeAnn Cross and her mother, Diana Davis, know firsthand what a diabetes diagnosis means. As graduates of the Lake Cumberland District Health Department's accredited diabetes self-management education program, they also know the significance of self-management.

"If you have been diagnosed with diabetes, you need to take an accredited Diabetes Self-Management Class to understand what diabetes is, what it can do to your body, and how important it is to manage your diabetes to live a long, healthy life," said Cross. She learned about the program through her work in the school health program at the Lake Cumberland District Health Department.

Davis was diagnosed with diabetes 12 years ago and relied on medication to manage her disease until recently.

"I was then placed on Metformin once a day. As time went on, my A1C elevated and I then had to add other prescription medicine, not realizing I needed to watch what I was eating and thinking the medicine would take care of it," said Davis, who is retired from the Pulaski County Board of Education. "In June 2016, my daughter told me about a diabetes management class they were having at the Health Department. With my age and other things working against me, I realized it was time to know more about diabetes."

Soon, she learned more about keeping her diabetes on track by doing things like watching her carbohydrate intake. Cross did the same and in three months lost 12 pounds by counting daily carbohydrates and keeping a food diary. Her A1C dropped from 7.2 to 6.3, lowering her risk of long-term complications associated with diabetes.

"When I was diagnosed with diabetes I got depressed, but going to these classes made me realize it isn't the end of the world just because you have this chronic illness," said Cross. "You need to eat the right amount of foods, exercise and manage your diabetes. It is very important to take care of yourself from the beginning to live a long, healthy life."



Her mother agreed.

“I would tell anyone who needs this class to ‘Go for it,’” said Davis. “It is well worth your time to attend.”

To increase access to accredited programs across Kentucky, the DPH Diabetes Prevention and Control Program launched the Healthy Living with Diabetes program this year in cooperation with several local health departments throughout the Commonwealth. The purpose of the program is to help people with diabetes better manage the disease by focusing on seven important self-care behaviors including healthy eating; being active; monitoring; taking medications; problem-solving for high and low blood sugars and sick days; healthy coping; and reducing risks for long-term complications like kidney disease, amputations and blindness.

“Diabetes remains one of the major public health concerns in Kentucky. Hundreds of thousands are affected and many others are at risk of developing the disease,” said CHFS Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson. “Lowering the rate of diabetes as well as reducing other health risks associated with the disease requires knowledge and public education. Our diabetes self-management program is achieving these goals and has already helped numerous Kentuckians better manage the disease and lead healthier lives.”

Diabetes self-management education is a collaborative process through which people with diabetes gain skills and knowledge needed to modify their behavior and successfully self-manage their disease and its related conditions. The person with diabetes, the diabetes educator, and the healthcare team are involved in the process.

According to American Diabetes Association and American Association of Diabetes Educators, research indicates numerous improved outcomes for patients who complete diabetes self-management program, like Healthy Living with Diabetes. In addition to improved overall well-being, research shows diabetes self-management leads to;

- Decreased hospital admissions and readmissions.
- Improved diabetes control (1 percent reduction in patients’ A1C – a standard measure of diabetes management).
- Reduced onset and/or advancement of progression of diabetes complications.
- Increased healthful eating and physical activity behaviors.
- Increased healthy coping.
- Decreased depression and diabetes distress.

“Better outcomes are associated with the time spent with a diabetes educator,” said Kim DeCoste, a registered nurse and certified and licensed diabetes educator with DPH. “If you have diabetes or know someone with diabetes, talk to your healthcare provider or contact your local health department about enrolling in a course. Diabetes self-management training is a benefit covered by Medicare and most health plans when provided by a diabetes educator within an accredited or recognized program.”

DeCoste explained that Healthy Living with Diabetes was accredited this year. Healthy Living with Diabetes, Lake Cumberland District Health Department and Madison County Health Department offer accredited diabetes self-management education in over 50 counties around the state.

“Diabetes is an epidemic and it taking a terrible toll on the health and wellbeing of so many Kentuckians,” said Dr. Connie White, senior deputy commissioner for clinical affairs for DPH. “We want people to understand that diabetes can be managed and we can give them the tools to do so.”

According to the National Health Information Center, diabetes is one of the leading causes of death and disability in the United States. One in 11 Americans has diabetes - or more than 29 million people. Another 86 million adults in the U.S. are at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

For more information about diabetes resources, including Health Living with Diabetes or other diabetes self-management education courses, visit the Kentucky Diabetes Resources [Directory](#) . Diabetes self-management courses are available as well as programs for individuals who are at-risk for developing diabetes.

Governor Matt Bevin officially proclaimed November as Diabetes Awareness Month in Kentucky to help raise awareness about diabetes and those affected by the disease. The governor's proclamation can be viewed online [here](#). Later this month the Governor's Mansion in Frankfort will be lit up in light blue to recognize Diabetes awareness.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.

