Impact

An Ounce of Prevention staves off diabetes

This program educates and motivates participants to make lifestyle modifications to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes and its complications. It targets people at high risk for developing diabetes. English and Spanish-language materials and interactive lessons address modifiable risk factors.

Issue:
The total cost of diabetes for people in Nevada in 2006 was estimated at $1.5 billion. This estimate includes excess medical costs of more than $1 billion attributed to diabetes, and loss of productivity valued at approximately $464 million. Approximately one in 10 health care dollars is attributed to diabetes. People with diagnosed diabetes incur average expenditures of $11,744 per year, of which $6,649 is attributed to diabetes. Preventing diabetes translates into huge medical savings to patients and the community. Nationally, the prevalence of diabetes in the U.S. has increased from 1.5 million in 1958 to 24 million people in 2008. Individuals of Hispanic origin are 1.7 times as likely and African Americans 1.8 times as likely to develop diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age, making it imperative that programs reach out to the country's growing numbers of diverse populations.

What Has Been Done:
University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's An Ounce of Prevention targets Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans who are at an increased risk for developing the disease. Other individuals at risk are those who are:
- over 45 years of age
- overweight or obese
- have a family history of the disease
- women who have delivered a baby weighing nine or more pounds at birth.

Potential program participants are identified through the American Diabetes Association's "Take the Test. Know the Score" screening tool. Lessons help participants learn how to reduce their risk by making lifestyle modifications to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes and its complications. Two separate, culturally sensitive curricula were developed and published: "An Ounce of Prevention," the English version for all adults, and "Más Vale Prevenir," a Spanish version.

The program has five objectives. At the completion of the educational intervention, participants will:
- identify factors that contribute to the development of diabetes
- state two lifestyle modifications that will reduce their risk
- increase physical activity
- improve eating habits
- seek appropriate medical care.

An Ounce of Prevention is taught throughout various community centers, schools, senior centers and other agencies in the community in both English and Spanish.

Impact:
More than 1,200 Las Vegas residents have completed the program. In 2009, analyses of self-reported data showed a significant improvement in knowledge of diabetes, as well as knowledge of the risk factors for diabetes. Self-reported lifestyle behaviors also changed significantly. Physical activity increased, TV watching decreased and four of six food choice items demonstrated statistically significant changes.
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