

Guidelines and Approaches for Providing the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP)

Produced in Partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health

There are many things for employers to consider when deciding how to provide the DPP to employees. A discussion between the employer and trusted vendors can help determine the best approach.

Key questions to consider

- **Employee Demand** – Does the employer have enough staff to fill an on-site class? What are other alternatives? For example, offering an online option, combining with a community class, or partnering with another local worksite.
- **Online Experience** – Are employees comfortable using technology, and likely to go online several times a week to check in? Can employees access the program at work on company time?
- **Team-learning Approach** – Do employees prefer face-to-face learning? Will a personalized, group experience be more successful?
- **Community Classes** – Is the program available through a local hospital, YMCA, or Minnesota Extension program?
- **Payment Options** – Is the DPP covered through the health plan(s)? Even if an employer asks for it to be included in their benefit offerings it may not be covered. What are other alternatives? For example, using discretionary dollars, training budgets, asking the employee to pay a portion of the fee (which could enhance personal accountability and likelihood of successful program completion).

Offering the DPP as a Covered Benefit – a CDC Goal

With growing concern over the millions of Americans affected by prediabetes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is requesting that employers cover the DPP as part of their benefit plans. Doing so enables and simplifies employee access to the program, and demonstrates a commitment to stopping or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes.

- **Self-insured employers** have more leeway in asking health plans for the type of services they want included in their benefit plans. This will likely include an additional fee, but this eases the administrative burden for employers.
- **Fully insured employers** are usually purchasing a set panel of services, with a clear set of deliverables and price points for each plan. To arrive at pricing, the health insurer places groups in a pool of employers. This pool is rated by claims experience, and rates are then set. Health plans may be less willing to add programs outside the basic options.
- **The City of Duluth, St. Louis County, and the State of Minnesota**, three self-insured organizations, offer the DPP to their employees with great success. Their planning and implementation experience serves as an inspiration to other employers considering offering the DPP as a covered benefit.

Scenarios

The following scenarios are hypothetical, and offer suggestions about how to determine the best method for offering the DPP at your workplace.

Multiple Delivery Options (Online, Community, On-site)

- **Employer Profile** – One state has 98,600 covered lives in its health care benefits plan (active employees, dependents, retirees). About 32,800 have prediabetes and, if nothing changes, up to 3,300 will develop type 2 diabetes next year, with an increasing number developing the disease in each subsequent year. Because the workforce is scattered across the state, and access to online, community and on-site options is highly variable, multiple delivery options will be available.

- **Making the Case** – The senior director of health plan management was approached with a business case detailing the risk of diabetes and other chronic conditions affecting employees, whose average age is 42.
- **Delivery** – By using a well-designed quick poll, the director determined that multiple options would work best. While the majority of employees indicated they are comfortable with technology, many have a high preference for community and on-site programs as a way to increase accountability and community.
- **Payment** – The state will be paying Digital Diabetes to deliver the online program; the YMCA to deliver community programs; and will use the services of employed community health workers to deliver the program on-site. The program will be paid for through the wellness program budget. The state will negotiate payment for the online and YMCA programs using a pay-for-performance model. Participants will be charged a nominal fee to encourage a sense of personal investment.
- **Marketing and Recruitment** – Digital Diabetes and the YMCA will provide marketing and recruitment services to employees, supplemented by internal communications resources that will promote all three options. Letters will be mailed to employees, flyers will be posted in the worksite, website banners will be on the intranet, and notifications will be sent via a monthly newsletter to encourage employees to participate. They hope to have at least half of those who meet eligibility requirements participate.
- **Program Benefits** – A multi-channel approach ensures that a variety of employee needs and preferences can be met. Quarterly reports will be available for each option to assess progress. To date, over 38% of program “graduates” reached the highest goal of losing >5% of their body weight; another 29% fell in the 3%-4% weight loss range. Among the 3,500 who graduated from the first phase of the program, a total of 22,560 pounds have been lost.

Online

- **Employer Profile** – The County of Luxton has 4,300 covered lives and over \$29.5 million in annual claims expenditures. Over half of the workforce is in office settings.
- **Making the Case** – The city manager was approached with a business case detailing the risk of diabetes and other chronic conditions affecting employees, whose average age is 46.
- **Delivery** – The HR manager determined the online option would work best. Most employees are comfortable with technology, through work and home computers, tablets and smart phones. There are computers in the break rooms, too, with scheduled and facilitated training sessions.
- **Payment** – The city will be paying Prevention Health to deliver the online program to eligible employees, covered family members, and retirees. The program will be paid for through the wellness program budget, which was increased to cover this class. The County of Luxton will negotiate payment for the program using a pay-for-performance model. Employees will not be charged a nominal fee to participate.
- **Marketing and Recruitment** – Prevention Health will provide marketing and recruitment services to employees. Letters will be mailed to employees, flyers will be posted in the worksite, and notifications will be sent via a monthly newsletter to encourage employees to participate. They hope to have at least half of those who meet eligibility requirements participate, and will host onsite activities to offer additional support.
- **Program Benefits** – The DPP is a great addition to the wellness program and Prevention Health is provide monthly reports to ensure success levels are on track and course corrections can be made as needed.

Community

- **Employer Profile** – Pro-com is a manufacturing firm making small computer parts for a large supplier. There are 23 employees who work in front of high-resolution microscopes every day. The average age is 38, and the obesity rate is high.
- **Making the Case** – The HR manager is concerned that many employees are overweight or obese, and several have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. She found out the DPP was being offered at the YMCA in a neighboring town. The town is 24 miles away, making it difficult for employees to get there regularly.
- **Delivery** – The HR manager partnered with the YMCA in the neighboring town to hire a YMCA Lifestyle Coach to deliver the DPP at the worksite. The HR manager also approached three other employers in the same office building to encourage them to offer the program to their employees. Together they were able to recruit 12 people and start a class.
- **Payment** – Each company paid the \$429* participant fee for their employees.



- **Marketing and Recruitment** – The trainer suggested advertising in the community, and three more participants joined.
- **Program Benefits** – Group members have enjoyed meeting employees from other organizations, and have started walking together over the lunch hour three days per week. The group has lost an average of a pound a week, in the first 16 weeks, and two did not finish the 16 weeks.

On-site Class

- **Employer Profile** – EZ Insurance is a claims processing center with 305 employees.
- **Making the Case** – They have a robust wellness program, and agreed that the DPP is a valuable tool to offer employees because of the focus on healthy eating and active living.
- **Delivery** – The HR director wanted to offer a convenient onsite option for employees. He asked two employees involved in the company worksite wellness program to attend Lifestyle Coach training. After completing the training, these employees were able to offer the DPP at the worksite on company time. Because classes are offered onsite, care is taken to provide privacy during the weekly weigh-ins. Employees sign an agreement that they will keep all group discussions confidential.
- **Payment** – EZ Insurance asks employees to pay for 50% of the class. Employees are fully reimbursed for their portion if they complete 80% of the yearlong program.
- **Marketing and Recruitment** – EZ Insurance offered a DPP Information session to all employees. Employees were able to learn more about prediabetes, determine their risk, and find out if the DPP was right for them. Fifteen employees expressed interest and were contacted by the EZ Insurance wellness coordinator for further follow up and enrollment.
- **Program Benefits** – The program saved \$2,650 for each person enrolled in the prevention program over 15 months, compared with similar employees not in the program. That was more than enough to cover the costs.

