

The Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act (H.R. 1686)

About Us

Registered dietitian nutritionists work to improve the health of all Americans through access to healthy food and nutrition services. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is a nonpartisan organization representing more than 75,000 members nationwide. We are the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals (www.eatright.org).

Support the Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act

The Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act (H.R. 1686) would amend the Social Security Act to extend Medicare coverage for Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) services for persons with prediabetes and risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes. Under current law, Medicare covers MNT provided by a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) only for beneficiaries with diabetes and renal disease. The Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act would allow people with prediabetes to access MNT services from an RDN, giving them the necessary tools to help prevent the development of Type-2 diabetes – a very costly disease.

Medical Nutrition Therapy

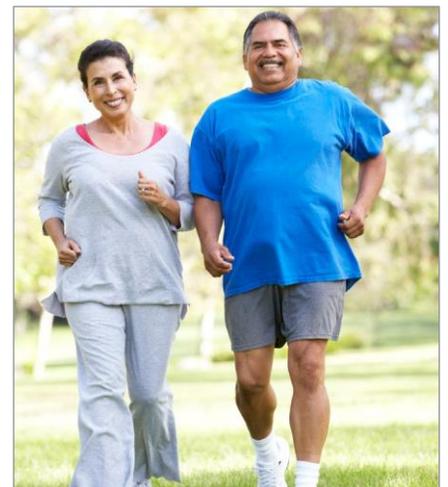
Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) is a nutritional diagnostic, therapy and counseling service for disease management. When provided by an RDN, MNT includes: 1) lifestyle, knowledge and skills assessment, 2) negotiation of individualized nutrition goals, 3) nutrition intervention, and 4) evaluation of clinical and behavioral outcomes. To ensure an individualized therapeutic plan, MNT is conducted through one-on-one sessions between an RDN and an individual. MNT provided by an RDN is similar to the one-on-one counseling provided during national trials that were found to prevent diabetes; people receiving MNT have shown successful weight loss and improved prediabetes insulin markers.¹

Diabetes in the United States

Almost 1 in 10 people in the U.S. (or 29.1 million people) have diabetes, and approximately 86 million have prediabetes.² The diabetes burden among people over age 65 is staggering: over ¼ of the Medicare-eligible population (11.2 million) has diabetes.³ In the U.S., diabetes is the leading cause of death of kidney failure, amputation and blindness and results in higher risk of premature death, cardiovascular disease and nerve disease.⁴

Key Takeaways:

- Over one-quarter of the Medicare-eligible population (11.2 million over the age of 65) has diabetes.
- The total cost of diabetes to our healthcare system in 2012 was estimated to be \$322 billion.
- Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) provided by a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) is an effective, evidence-based practice that can result in weight loss and improved blood glucose.
- The Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act will allow Medicare to reimburse RDNs to provide MNT to patients at risk of diabetes or with prediabetes, in addition to patients with diabetes and renal disease.



1 Corpeleign E. et al. (2006). Improvements in glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity after lifestyle intervention are related to changes in serum fatty acid profile and desaturase activities: the SLM study. *Diabetologia*. 49(10):2392-2401.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National Diabetes Statistics Report: Estimates of Diabetes and its Burden in the US, 2014*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2014.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

Diet and Exercise Lifestyle Modification Programs Can Prevent Diabetes

In 2002, the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) showed that participation in a diet and exercise lifestyle intervention for three years could result in a 71 percent decrease in the number of new cases of diabetes compared to a control group for people age 60-85.⁵ Then in 2009, the NDPP showed that, 10 years after the start of the program, there was still a 49 percent decrease in the number of new cases of diabetes compared to a control group.⁶ People participated in the program for only a few years, but the benefits extended for a decade.

MNT is a part of successful diet and exercise lifestyle modification. Research shows that MNT provided by a registered dietitian nutritionist is an effective evidence-based practice that can result in weight loss, obesity prevention and improved prediabetes insulin markers, which are the same essential outcomes of other diabetes prevention programs.^{7,8}



The Cost of Diabetes

The total cost of diabetes to our health care system in 2012 was estimated to be \$322 billion, including \$244 billion in excess medical expenditures and \$78 billion in reduced national productivity. Combined, this amounts to an economic burden exceeding \$1,000 for each American in 2012. The average yearly health care costs for a person with diabetes is \$13,700, with \$7,900 due to diabetes alone.¹⁰ One out of every four federal health care dollars is spent treating people with diabetes.¹¹

Diet and exercise lifestyle modification programs have consistently been shown to be cost-effective and even cost-saving methods for preventing and treating diabetes in participants, meaning that compared to other treatment options, such as medication, diet and exercise lifestyle modification programs gives the payer (Medicare) the best return on investment.^{12,13,14,15,16,17}

Estimated Diabetes Costs in the United States, 2012

Total (Direct and Indirect)
\$322 billion

Direct Medical Costs
\$244 billion
After adjusting for population age and sex differences, average medical expenditures among people with diagnosed diabetes were 2.3 times higher than people without diabetes.

Indirect Costs
\$78 billion
(disability, work loss, premature death).

View of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on the Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics supports the Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act (H.R. 1686), and is urging members of Congress to co-sponsor and support passage of the bill. By co-sponsoring and voting for the bill, members of Congress would ensure that patients with diabetes, prediabetes and renal disease and patients at risk for diabetes would have access to preventive treatment and medical nutrition therapy.

The Preventing Diabetes in Medicare Act (H.R. 1686) is a bipartisan bill that was introduced in the 114th Congress by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) and Rep. Ed Whitfield (R-Ky.).

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10 *Ibid*.

11 *Ibid*.

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14 Chatterjee R, et al., (2010). Screening adults for prediabetes and diabetes may be cost-saving. *Diabetes Care*. Vol 33(7): 1484-1490.

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