



Quality, value, and innovation to patients through

- Clinical and medical expertise
- Providers collaborating with patients
- Outcomes-oriented decision making

## Licensure of Diabetes Educators

### Empowering people with diabetes through effective education may improve health outcomes and lower costs<sup>1 2</sup>

More than 25 million Americans are living with diabetes. In 2010, approximately 1.9 million new cases aged 20 years or older were diagnosed in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Because proper treatment and care are critically important for people with diabetes, additional guidance from healthcare professionals may be beneficial and, thereby, improve health outcomes.

Empowering people with diabetes through education and guidance from healthcare professionals may also reduce costs across the healthcare system. The overall estimated economic cost of diabetes in 2007 was \$174 billion.<sup>4</sup> Many of these costs are due to complications from diabetes.<sup>5</sup> Diabetes is the number 1 cause of new adult blindness, renal failure, and non-traumatic lower-limb amputations. The risk for stroke is 2 to 4 times higher among people with diabetes. Adults with diabetes have heart disease death rates about 2 to 4 times higher than adults without diabetes.<sup>6</sup>

### Diabetes educators are trained to help people with diabetes manage the complexities of their disease and navigate the healthcare system more effectively

Some states are considering licensure of diabetes educators to recognize the profession and to create a statutory scope of practice. Licensure has numerous purposes: consumer protection, professional recognition, and setting quality guidelines for the profession.

Diabetes education, also known as diabetes self-management training (DSMT) or diabetes self-management education (DSME), is defined as a collaborative process through which people with or at risk for diabetes gain the knowledge and skills needed to modify behavior and successfully self-manage the disease and its related conditions. DSMT/DSME is an interactive, ongoing process involving the person with diabetes (or the caregiver or family) and a diabetes educator. The process aims to achieve optimal health status, better quality of life and reduce the need for costly healthcare.<sup>7</sup>

Diabetes educators are healthcare professionals who focus on educating/training people with or at risk for diabetes and related conditions. Their purpose is to help the person with diabetes achieve behavior change goals which, in turn, lead to better clinical outcomes and improved health status.<sup>8</sup> Behavior changes may include meal modification, glucose monitoring, improved adherence with diabetes medication and other behaviors that help a person with diabetes manage their health. Due to the complexity of diabetes, it is important that the healthcare professionals who work as diabetes educators be well-educated and appropriately credentialed in the delivery of quality diabetes education.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National Diabetes Fact Sheet 2011*. Accessible at: [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf)

2. American Association of Diabetes Educators. *Press Release: Study shows diabetes education lowers health care costs*. Accessible at: [http://www.diabeteseducator.org/About/Media/09.28.09\\_Press\\_Release](http://www.diabeteseducator.org/About/Media/09.28.09_Press_Release)

3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *National Diabetes Fact Sheet 2011*. Accessible at: [http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/pdf/ndfs_2011.pdf)

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. American Association of Diabetes Educators. *Diabetes Education Definition*. Accessible at: <http://www.diabeteseducator.org/DiabetesEducation/Definitions.html>

8. *Ibid.*

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