



## The Diabetes Educator State Licensure Issue – In Brief

Studies show Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) to be a cost-effective way to improve health outcomes for people with diabetes. However, Credentialed Diabetes Educators – the primary providers of outpatient diabetes education – are not recognized as DSMT providers by Medicare because there is no legal definition or scope of practice for diabetes education. State licensure for diabetes educators would establish this legal definition, and help in the effort to gain provider status. It would also set quality standards for providers and thus protect patients.

Here is a summary of the issues surrounding the state licensure initiative.

- Right now, anyone can say that he or she is a diabetes educator. There are thousands of healthcare professionals in the United States who are providing various levels of care and education to people with diabetes. But there is no proof that they are qualified to deliver DSMT – no requirements or coursework.
- In reality, this means that diabetes education is essentially an unregulated and largely unrecognized profession. There is no legal definition of the profession because it does not have a standardized scope of practice.
- Professionals who have earned the BC-ADM (Board Certified in Advanced Diabetes Management) and CDE<sup>®</sup> (Certified Diabetes Educator) credentials have demonstrated exceptional knowledge and experience in the field. However, these credentials are not required to practice diabetes education.
- Even though healthcare professionals must be licensed in their respective fields to be eligible to sit for these credentials, professional licensure boards have no jurisdiction over the practice of diabetes education or the diabetes educator.
- If licensure were limited to those who have earned the BC-ADM and CDE<sup>®</sup> credentials, the workforce of diabetes educators would be severely limited, with little hope of meeting the needs of the growing diabetes population. There are only about 17,000 Credentialed Diabetes Educators in the country. There are nearly 26 million Americans with diabetes, and another 79 million with pre-diabetes.
- Licensure would set the minimum quality standards and the scope of practice.
- The requirements for the diabetes educator license will be determined on a state-by-state basis during the regulatory process, after legislation is passed. AADE has no power over the licensure standards, although it has made specific recommendations for licensure requirements.
- AADE recognizes that professionals who have earned the BC-ADM or CDE<sup>®</sup> credential would surpass the minimum qualifications for licensure and has reflected this in our recommendations for state licensure requirements.