



## Overview of the State Licensure for Diabetes Educators Effort

Diabetes affects nearly 26 million people in the United States. Another 79 million people are estimated to have pre-diabetes. Studies show Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) to be a cost-effective way to improve health outcomes. However, Qualified Diabetes Educators – the primary providers of diabetes education – are not recognized as DSMT providers by Medicare. AADE has long advocated federal legislation – the Diabetes Self-Management Training Act – to change that. While AADE will continue with these federal legislation efforts, we also believe it is important to address this issue at the state level through licensure for diabetes educators.

The main barrier to gaining provider status for Qualified Diabetes Educators is that there is no legal definition or scope of practice for diabetes educators. Other healthcare professions have licensure or registration requirements and a professional scope of practice that give them a legal standing for recognition by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Currently, diabetes educators can take a certification exam, which does demonstrate knowledge in the diabetes field. Voluntary credentials, however, do not allow diabetes educators to work outside their license or nationally registered scope of practice.

Licensure would set the quality standards and the scope of practice for the diabetes educator. It also creates the legal definition that is needed to successfully advocate for increased reimbursement of and provider status for diabetes educators.

However, establishing state licensure is not an overnight endeavor. Nor is there a standardized procedure that can be followed in all states, as each state has its own legislative and regulatory process. Once this process has been initiated, it could take several years until the details have been worked out and the licensure implemented.

Through grassroots advocacy and targeted lobbying efforts at the state level, legislation must be drafted, endorsed, and passed. Then regulatory bodies will set specific qualifications for the license in that particular state.

While the requirements for diabetes educator licensure will be determined on a state-by-state basis, the AADE has proposed and recommended certain qualifications and standards for individuals seeking to become a licensed diabetes educator.

## AADE Recommendations for State Licensure Requirements

AADE believes that Diabetes Self-Management Training (DSMT) is a crucial element in the health care of people with diabetes. DSMT is shown to reduce health care costs and deliver health benefits to patients. State licensure sets the quality standards and scope of practice for diabetes educators who wish to provide DSMT. While AADE does not have power over licensure standards, we advocate that state regulatory licensing boards consider the following recommendations:

### **Discipline**

- Healthcare professional disciplines include, but are not limited to: registered nurses, registered dietitians, registered pharmacists, licensed mental health professionals, and exercise physiologists.

### **Education**

- A bachelor's degree or education that meets the state's healthcare professional licensure requirements for the primary discipline. Completion of AADE's Core Concepts Course or a diabetes education program sponsored by any advanced academic or continuing education organization that meets state-determined standards and provides a minimum of 15 hours of learning in the biological and social sciences, communication, counseling, and education.
- 15 hours of continuing education related to diabetes self-management education and training each year.

### **Professional Practice Experience**

- 250 hours within a two-year time frame, specific to diabetes self-management education and training; evidence of experience caring for people with diabetes.

## Making State Licensure for Diabetes Educators a Reality

As we move forward with this State Licensure Initiative, it is imperative that the AADE membership not only understands how licensure legislation is passed, but also knows that we are here to help guide and support the efforts from beginning to end.

The first step in starting the state licensure process is to contact James Specker, AADE Federal and State Advocacy Manager, at [jspecker@aadenet.org](mailto:jspecker@aadenet.org) or (312) 601-4873, to begin creating a strategy and to determine how to best approach the licensure effort in your state.