

COMPETENCIES
FOR
DIABETES EDUCATORS
AND
DIABETES
PARAPROFESSIONALS



American Association
of Diabetes Educators

A Companion
Document to the
Practice Levels for
Diabetes Educators
& Diabetes
Paraprofessionals

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American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE)
200 West Madison Street, Suite, 800
Chicago, Illinois 60606
<http://www.diabeteseducator.org>

Diabetes Educator Competencies Work Group:

Jane Dickinson, RN, PhD, CDE®
Barbara Kocurek, PharmD, BS, RPh, BCPS, CDE®, FADE
Nathan Painter, PharmD, CDE®
Ardis Reed, MPH, RD, LD, CDE®, CCHWI

AADE Staff:

Margaret M. Maloney, MA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of Diabetes Educator and Diabetes Paraprofessional Practice Levels

The purpose of the practice levels is to increase access to diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) and achieve better patient care by:

1. Delineating the roles and responsibilities of the multiple levels of diabetes educators and diabetes paraprofessionals.
2. Suggesting a career path for diabetes educators and diabetes paraprofessionals. Levels of practice are designed to help individuals determine his or her appropriate entry point into the practice of diabetes education and support and to clarify the competencies required for the advancement to the next level.
3. Clarifying the contribution that can be made by individuals who have the knowledge, capability, diversity, and language skills needed to address diabetes self-management education and support in a variety of settings.

Purpose of Diabetes Educator and Paraprofessional Competencies

The intent of the competencies is to provide:

1. A master list of the minimal knowledge and skills needed across the continuum of care for the various levels of practice.
2. A basis for education, training, development, and performance appraisal of anyone engaged in diabetes education and support.

The revised competencies reflect current practices and are intended to be a **general guideline** regarding the roles and responsibilities of each member of the diabetes education and support team.

The competencies **are not job descriptions**. Specific roles or job descriptions will reflect the requirements of the practice setting, program and support services offered, and the professional scopes of each member of the team.

The competencies provide structure for the **minimal** knowledge, skills, and abilities required for practice at each level across the continuum of diabetes care. The knowledge base needed to provide quality diabetes education and support is multifaceted, so the competencies are structured into five domains. Within each domain, the competency is defined and specific objectives are identified for each practice level.

The roles and responsibilities described in the practice level are intended for use by all individuals and organizations involved in the facilitation and delivery of diabetes education and care for all persons with prediabetes or diabetes and their families/caregivers. However, diabetes education and support services are provided through a wide array of private and public practice settings. The size and composition of the healthcare teams providing these services vary across the country and throughout practice settings. It is beyond the scope and intention of the practice levels and

competencies to address the range of activities that diabetes care practitioners may be educated and authorized to perform based on facility and organizational policies and bylaws, protocols, clinical privileging, state practice acts, and state occupational supervision regulations.

How to Read the Competencies

Under each domain and within each practice level there are objectives that outline the roles and responsibilities for that level.

Each objective stated at the lowest level **carries through to any and all higher practice levels**. For example, an objective stated for a Diabetes Paraprofessional Level 1, holds true for Diabetes Paraprofessional Level 2, Diabetes Educator Level 1, Diabetes Educator Level 2, and Diabetes Educator Level 3. If an objective starts at the Diabetes Educator Level 2, then it carries through to Diabetes Educator Level 3. In addition, any competency included in one domain carries through to all other domains.

Overview

More than 29 million Americans have diabetes and an additional 86 million are believed to have prediabetes.¹ At the global level, the number of people with diabetes has more than doubled in the past three decades.² The total economic cost of diabetes in the U.S. alone was estimated at \$245 billion in 2012.¹ Diabetes is a chronic, progressive disease that requires daily self-management.^{3,4} To deal with the complexities of day-to-day diabetes, people with this disease must not only have core knowledge, but he or she must also possess the skills, abilities, and motivation for self-management.⁵

Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) is an interactive, collaborative, and ongoing 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. The process of DSMES incorporates the individual's needs, goals, and life experiences, and is guided by evidence-based standards. The overall objectives of DSMES are to support informed decision-making, self-care behaviors, problem solving, and active collaboration with the healthcare team and to improve clinical outcomes, health status, and quality of life.⁶

Patient education occurs in a number of settings and is delivered by multiple providers.⁷ However, there is a distinction between patient education and DSMES.⁵ Patient education is the simple transfer of information, while DSMES “encompasses the complex array of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to maximize effective self-management.”^{5, 8, 9-11}

How do diabetes educators acquire the knowledge and skills needed to effectively provide DSMES? Traditionally, diabetes educators represent multidisciplinary environments and therefore each diabetes educator brings a different perspective to his or her own program, based on their field of expertise, education, experience, and credentialing. Nevertheless, even within the diabetes specialist community, competence varies with education, training, and experience.

Clinicians interested in diabetes education had frequently been self-taught, building on the basic diabetes content provided in their respective professional curricula and within their work setting. Individuals used books, journals, patient education materials, continuing education opportunities, and on-the-job training or informal apprenticeships to acquire the fundamental background needed for diabetes educator positions.¹²

The Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators defines diabetes education, the role of the educator, and the scope and minimal performance standards for diabetes educators.^{3, 13}

Although there were national standards for provision of diabetes self-management education,⁶ there were no standards or guidelines for clinicians to acquire and refine the core knowledge and skills and adaptation needed to become or develop fully into a diabetes educator.

Given the magnitude of the diabetes epidemic, the continual advances in science and technology, and the changing healthcare landscape, it was critical to provide a delineated structure of

competencies as they relate to the skills, knowledge, application, adaptation and support for each practice level of people engaged in diabetes education.

History*

To address this need, AADE convened two workgroups in 2007 to draft guidelines for the practice of diabetes self-management education, to define a career pathway in diabetes education, and to identify the key knowledge, skills, and abilities of the diabetes educator.

The workgroups published two documents in 2009: the *AADE Guidelines for the Practice of Diabetes Self-Management Education and Training* and *Competencies for Diabetes Educators: A Companion Document to the Guidelines for the Practice of Diabetes Education*.

The *Guidelines* defined 5 practice levels and the *Competencies* described the skills and knowledge needed for each level. ^{14, 15}

In 2013, the AADE Board of Directors empaneled a workgroup to review the existing levels of practice for diabetes educators, and existing professional support documents. The charge was to determine if the 5 previously designated diabetes educator levels of practice were appropriate, and if the Association's supporting documents reflected current practice. The workgroup recommended a revision of the levels of practice to better reflect new developments in diabetes disease management and healthcare, including the increased prevalence of prediabetes and diabetes, and changes in the healthcare professionals and paraprofessionals providing DSMES. This revision to the levels of practice was approved by the AADE Board of Directors in April 2014 and published in the document *Diabetes Educator Practice Levels* in 2014. ¹⁶

The revised practice levels included Diabetes Educator, Levels 1-3 and Diabetes Paraprofessionals, Levels 1-2. The next step in the process was to review the competencies in light of the revised practice levels and changes in DSMES and in healthcare delivery. The results are the set of revised competencies described in detail below.

Practice Levels and Competencies: Application and Use

Published guidelines and competencies acknowledge the value of diabetes education providers across a broad continuum, from the community health worker to the advanced-level diabetes care and education provider³

Each level of practice builds on the previous one(s), and recognizes that expertise within each level increases over time. To be successful with diabetes self-management, the patient must know what to do (knowledge), how to do it (skill), and how to act on the results of the tasks of self-management (adaptation). ¹⁷ Depending on the level of the educator, the focus of interaction with

*This section provides an abbreviated description of the development of the practice levels and the competencies. For a more detailed description of the methodology and process, see the narrative overviews of the following documents: *AADE Guidelines for the Practice of Diabetes Self-Management Education and Training* 2009, *Practice Levels for Diabetes Educators* 2014, *Competencies for Diabetes Educators: A Companion Document to the Guidelines for the Practice of Diabetes Education*. 2009.

the patient will vary according to these elements.¹⁷

The purpose of the practice levels is to increase access to DSMES and achieve better patient care by:

1. Delineating the roles and responsibilities of the multiple levels of diabetes educators and diabetes paraprofessionals.
2. Suggesting a career path for diabetes educators and diabetes paraprofessionals. Levels of practice are designed to help individuals determine his or her appropriate entry point in to the practice of diabetes education and to clarify the competencies required for the advancement to the next level.
3. Clarifying the contribution that can be made by individuals who have the knowledge, capability, diversity, and language skills needed to address diabetes self-management education and support in a variety of settings.

The intent of the competencies is to provide:

1. A master list of the minimal knowledge and skills needed across the continuum of care for the various levels of practice.
2. A basis for education, training, development, and performance appraisal of anyone engaged in diabetes education and support

The revised competencies reflect current practices and are intended to be a *general guideline* regarding the roles and responsibilities of each member of the diabetes education and support team. Specific roles or job descriptions will reflect the requirements of the practice setting, program and support services offered, and the professional scopes of each member of the team.

The competencies provide structure for the knowledge, skills and abilities required for practice at each level across the continuum of diabetes care. The knowledge base needed to provide quality diabetes education is multifaceted, so the competencies are structured into five domains. Within each domain, the competency is defined and specific objectives are identified for each practice level.

- Domain 1: Pathophysiology, Epidemiology, and Clinical Practice of Prediabetes and Diabetes

Competency Statement: Demonstrates familiarity with pathophysiology, epidemiology, and clinical practice consistent with practice level.

- Domain 2: Cultural Competency Across the Lifespan

Competency Statement: Provides diabetes support and care in a culturally-competent manner across the lifespan.

- Domain 3: Teaching and Learning Skills

Competency Statement: Applies current principles of teaching and learning and/or behavior change to facilitate self-management skills. Pursues ongoing professional development

- Domain 4: Self-Management Education

Competency Statement: Works with an interdisciplinary diabetes care team to tailor interventions to individual self-management education needs.

- Domain 5: Program and Business Management

Competency Statement: Applies principles of program and/or business management to create a climate that supports successful self-management of diabetes.

The roles and responsibilities described in the practice level are intended for use by all individuals and organizations involved in the facilitation and delivery of diabetes education and care for all persons with prediabetes or diabetes and their families/caregivers. However, diabetes education and support services are provided through a wide array of private and public practice settings. The size and composition of the healthcare teams providing these services vary across the country and throughout practice settings. It is beyond the scope and intention of the practice levels and competencies to address the range of activities that diabetes care practitioners may be educated and authorized to perform based on facility and organizational policies and bylaws, protocols, clinical privileging, state practice acts, and state occupational supervision regulations.

Navigating the Competency Tables

At the top of each competency table there is a competency statement that describes the overall purpose of the competency.

Each practice level is described in detail in Appendix of this document. Appendix 1: Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1-2 and Appendix 2: Diabetes Educator, Level 1-3. Under each domain and within each practice level there are objectives that outline the roles and responsibilities for that level.

Each objective stated at the lowest level carries through to any and all higher practice levels. For example, an objective stated for a Diabetes Paraprofessional Level 1, holds true for Diabetes Educator Paraprofessional Level 2, Diabetes Educator Level 1, Diabetes Educator Level 2, and Diabetes Educator Level 3. If an objective starts at the Diabetes Educator Level 2, then it carries through to Diabetes Educator Level 3. In addition, any competency included in one domain carries through to all other domains.

Throughout the competencies the words “people” and “person” refer to someone who has diabetes.

Domain 1: Pathophysiology, Epidemiology, and Clinical Practice of Prediabetes and Diabetes

Competency: Demonstrates familiarity with pathophysiology, epidemiology, and clinical practice consistent with practice level.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Identifies differences between prediabetes, type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and gestational diabetes.
	Lists signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia.
	Lists common complications of diabetes, e.g., eye, nerve, kidney, and so forth.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Describes the differences between prediabetes, type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and gestational diabetes.
	Recognizes the signs and symptoms of hypoglycemia and treats as appropriate.
	Recognizes common complications of diabetes, e.g., eye, nerve, kidney, and so forth.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Describes normal glucose metabolism.
	Explains the pathophysiologic mechanisms responsible for the development of prediabetes, type 1 diabetes, type 2 diabetes, and gestational diabetes.
	Explains the signs and symptoms of acute hyperglycemia, hyperosmolar hyperglycemic state (HHS), and diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA).
	Identifies causes of hypoglycemia.
	Identifies common risk factors for the development of the acute and chronic complications of diabetes.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Outlines the pathophysiology of gestational diabetes and its relationship to the development of type 2 diabetes.
	Describes the pathophysiologic basis of hypoglycemia, HHS, and DKA.
	Identifies risk factors for hypoglycemia, HHS, and DKA.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Applies knowledge of diabetes pathophysiology to direct diabetes education and/or diabetes care.

EPIDEMIOLOGY OF PREDIABETES and DIABETES DISEASE STATE

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Recognizes the current impact of prediabetes and diabetes in their community, county and/or state.

	Lists risk factors for developing prediabetes and diabetes.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Describes the current impact of prediabetes and diabetes in their community, county and/or state. Recognizes the risk factors for developing prediabetes and diabetes.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Recognizes local prevalence of prediabetes and diabetes in community, county, and state. Identifies groups at risk for acute and chronic complications.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Recognizes the effects of healthcare disparities on the person. Recognizes population trends for at risk groups in your community.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Provides clinical expertise to others on the healthcare team. Communicates population trends and health disparities to key stakeholders.

CLINICAL PRACTICE

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Lists the AADE7 Self-Care Behaviors™ framework.
	Identifies the policies and procedures for their specific practice setting.
	Recognizes when a person’s questions need to be addressed by clinical staff.
	Repeats, in basic healthcare language, the diagnosis and instructions given by the healthcare provider.
	Collects physical assessment data, e.g., blood pressure, fingerstick blood glucose, weight.
	Follows workplace-specific clinical practice protocols and guidelines applicable to diabetes management.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Describes the AADE7 Self-Care Behaviors™ framework.
	Explains the policies and procedures for their specific practice setting.
	Directs a person’s questions to clinical staff when appropriate.
	Summarizes, in basic healthcare language, the diagnosis and instructions given by the healthcare provider.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Applies current principles of evidence-based practice.
	Participates in the evaluation of program, unit, or agency processes.
	Updates workplace-specific policies and procedures in accordance with current standards of care.
	Interprets physical and psychosocial data.

Diabetes Educator, Level 2

Evaluates diabetes education, support, and care delivery according to current standards of care.

Develops or revises diabetes education and support policies and procedures according to standards of care.

Assesses current trends from diabetes research for application to practice.

Refers for clinical care outside the expertise of educator's discipline.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3

Applies best available evidence to assist in the review and/or the development of clinical practice guidelines.

Facilitates coordination and communication with healthcare team.

Serves as content expert for diabetes education and management.

Maintains and applies advanced clinical knowledge and skills appropriate to the educator's scope of practice.

Domain 2: Cultural Competency Across the Lifespan

Competency: Provides diabetes support and care in a culturally-competent manner across the lifespan.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

Level	
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Recognizes that attitudes about health and self-care vary across cultures and regions.
	Recognizes language barriers and works effectively with interpreters.
	Acknowledges the importance of emotional and spiritual preferences in diabetes self-management and support.
	Provides education in a culturally-appropriate manner.
	Works with healthcare team to identify and overcome cultural barriers to self-care or behavior change.
	Provides accurate information and healthcare provider recommendations in a culturally appropriate manner.
	Identifies own cultural humility and awareness as it relates to chronic disease and self-care behaviors. Incorporates sensitivity and respect when educating all persons irrespective of ethnicity, race, age, socioeconomic status, physical or cognitive disabilities, or gender choice.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Utilizes educational materials consistent with person’s age, literacy level, cultural or ethnic background, and physical or cognitive disabilities.
	Integrates cultural awareness and competence into all aspects of teaching the person and the healthcare providers.
	Acknowledges cultural traditions when providing diabetes education and care.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Understands definitions of race, ethnicity, and culture, including the culture of medicine.
	Selects educational materials consistent with person’s age, literacy and numeracy level, cultural or ethnic background, and physical or cognitive disabilities.
	Uses culturally appropriate information to establish therapeutic relationship or uses pertinent cultural data in care of person.
	Recognizes cultural and socio-economic challenges in person’s ability to self-manage their disease.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Facilitates problem solving in cultural and socio-economic challenges in patients.
	Models culturally-competent behavior to healthcare team members.
	Works with community groups to meet the needs of specific cultural populations and address barriers.
	Recognizes that cultural issues affect health and healthcare quality and cost.
	Recognizes own cultural sensitivity and humility.
	Recognizes person/family-centered beliefs vs. health provider beliefs.

	Understands work culture and issues.
	Develops and evaluates the effectiveness of diabetes program to ensure health disparities are addressed.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Creates and disseminates educational programs and materials to address different cultural, physical, cognitive, literacy, and numeracy needs.
	Works to eliminate healthcare disparities in vulnerable populations.

LIFESPAN

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Identifies person with prediabetes or diabetes that could benefit from diabetes self-management education and support.
	Identifies age-appropriate community resources that can support AADE7 Self Care Behaviors™ and patient-specific social support systems.
	Encourages use of family and community support systems.

Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Discusses impact of diabetes across the lifespan, e.g., pediatrics, pregnancy, older adults.
	Recognizes that person with prediabetes or diabetes have different needs depending on their age and duration of illness.
	Recognizes the current impact of prediabetes and diabetes across the lifespan, e.g., pediatrics, pregnancy, older adults.

Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Provides evidenced-based-diabetes education to person across the lifespan.
	Assesses support systems available to person across the lifespan and/or for specific populations.
	Develops community coalitions to meet the needs across the lifespan.

Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Uses age-appropriate theories for information, application, health, and chronic disease self-management education.
	Assists person to develop coping skills appropriate for chronologic and developmental age.
	Assists other healthcare providers to develop and apply age-appropriate teaching strategies.
	Identifies and assesses local and regional communities to establish effective support networks for person.
	Promotes safe transitions in the care of diabetes for person across the lifespan.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Assesses and establishes effective support networks in the local, state, and regional communities for person across the lifespan.
	Individualizes management plans and education across the lifespan.

Domain 3: Teaching and Learning Skills

Competency: Applies current principles of teaching and learning and/or behavior change to facilitate self-management skills.

Pursues ongoing professional development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Reinforces information provided by healthcare team.
	Identifies and refers questions and/or needs of the person to the appropriate team member.
	Identifies and refers own questions or needs to the appropriate team member.
	Assists person in obtaining accurate and appropriate diabetes educational materials or resources.
	Uses the AADE7 Self-Care Behaviors™ framework.
	Recognizes basic literacy, numeracy, physical, cultural and cognitive barriers.
	Assists with addressing language barriers.
	Collaborates with person to develop behavior goals in alignment with the treatment plan; assesses progress toward goal achievement and modifies the education interventions accordingly or seeks assistance with barrier resolution/other identified issues from appropriate team member.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Demonstrates adult learning techniques/participatory teaching in delivery of education, e.g., teach back method.
	Ensures the priorities and concerns of patients are identified and addressed.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Applies health behavior and education theory to inform, motivate, and support person throughout the lifespan.
	Teaches, reinforces, and validates diabetes self-management skills, including survival skills.
	Assesses person's skills and knowledge level, education, and support needs.
	Assesses health literacy, readiness to learn, preferred learning style and barriers to learning.
	Collaborates with person and healthcare team to problem solve difficulties in attainment of behavior goals.
	Works with person to develop a personalized follow-up plan for ongoing self-management support.
	Communicates person's outcomes, goals and plan for ongoing self-management support to other members of the healthcare team.
Plans and implements diabetes self-management education and support.	
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Facilitates an individualized education plan that is focused on behavior change.

	Applies knowledge of age-specific learning principles, health literacy, and behavior change theory to develop effective diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) programs.
	Serves as a resource in curriculum development and maintenance, program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Supports the professional development of diabetes educators and other healthcare professionals.
	Mentors new diabetes educators and diabetes paraprofessionals.

BEHAVIOR CHANGE/SUPPORT

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Reinforces individualized behavior change plan. Facilitates and supports communication between person and healthcare team.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Identifies potential barriers to self-management. Promotes behavior change to improve health outcomes.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Facilitates problem-solving to overcome barriers. Applies basic motivational interviewing skills to assist person in appropriate and measurable goal setting, i.e., implements behavioral goal plan for person. Helps patients use shared decision-making tools to promote behavior change. Demonstrates respect for choices made by person. Develops an individualized support plan in collaboration with person. Communicates progress with healthcare team.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Utilizes motivational interviewing and other techniques to identify person’s readiness to change. Develops strategies for change. Applies shared decision-making to promote behavior change.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Fluidly shifts among behavioral approaches to meet evolving needs of person. Teaches behavioral theories and approaches to colleagues and other healthcare professionals.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Seeks ongoing education to keep current on diabetes education and standards of care. Participates in diabetes-related events.

Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Maintains skills and knowledge consist with the AADE Practice levels competencies.
	Identifies current healthcare technologies that person may be using, e.g. healthcare-related mobile apps, wearable technology, and social media.
	Maintains minimum continuing education units (CEUs) for credential and/or state requirements.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Applies current evidence-based theory, practice, and standards of care.
	Maintains diabetes/diabetes-related continuing education (CE) credits per discipline.
	Complies with professional, ethical, laws, regulations, and policies according to professional practice.
	Recognizes and practices within own areas of skill and expertise.
	Employs current computer/health information technologies and digital and mobile technology skills.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Critically appraises own knowledge, skills, and work practices and develops a professional development plan to address deficiencies.
	Seeks feedback of own performance from peers and others involved in diabetes care.
	Reviews current peer-reviewed research literature on pathophysiology of prediabetes and diabetes.
	Keeps current on diabetes- and healthcare-related technologies / person-facing technologies, e.g., mobile apps for communicating with people with diabetes and for data collection and analysis, continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) pumps and other wearable technologies.
	Keeps current on regulatory and privacy issues associated with new healthcare technologies.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Participates in professional organization workgroups/committee to promote field of diabetes education.
	Seeks advanced-level educational opportunities in diabetes education and management.
	Develops and delivers diabetes education programs for healthcare providers and others.
	Demonstrates a knowledge of ethical practice for conducting research.
	Participates or collaborates in research.
	Develops and conducts or participates in diabetes-related research activities according to educational preparation.

Domain 4: Self-Management Education

Competency: Works with an interdisciplinary diabetes care team to tailor interventions to individual self-management education needs.

HEALTHY EATING	
Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Identifies general principles of healthy eating.
	Assists person with how to read a food label.
	Helps person navigate in grocery store tours.
	Provides instruction on completing a food record.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Reinforces principles of healthy eating.
	Identifies challenges to healthy eating, e.g., food insecurity, food desert location of home, inadequate finances to pay for both food and medicine.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Reviews meal plan and eating habits. Refers to Registered Dietitian (RD)/Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN) for medical nutrition therapy (MNT) as appropriate.
	Teaches and reinforces principles of healthy eating.
	Teaches how to read food labels.
	Teaches basic principles of carbohydrate counting (carb counting).
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Reviews and discusses body mass index (BMI), weight trend, and food log in personal health record.
	Teaches advanced concepts of carbohydrate counting and meal-based insulin dosing as appropriate.
	Explains the relationship between food, activity, medication, and blood glucose in preventing hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia.
	Evaluates nutrition-related lab values and refers to RD/RDN as appropriate.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Uses comprehensive knowledge of nutrition and diabetes meal planning to provide or support MNT to / for person with complex needs.
	Assess person's ability to manage blood glucose with carb counting, continuous glucose monitoring (CGM), and /or insulin pumps.
	Assesses adequacy of daily nutrition intake and refers to RD/RDN as needed.
	Assists endurance/competitive athletes with meal planning for training and competition, or refers if appropriate.

BEING ACTIVE	
Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Discusses the importance of physical activity in diabetes prevention and management.
	Reviews, reinforces, and encourages general principles of safe and effective physical activity.
	Provides instruction on completing personal health record for activity.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Reinforces physical activity plan.
	Assists qualified staff with exercise sessions.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Verifies medical clearances for exercise program and refers to healthcare team members as needed.
	Provides guidelines for a safe activity plan.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Explains the relationship between physical activity and blood glucose.
	Collaborates with person to develop a safe and effective activity plan.
	Assess effectiveness of individual activity plan/action plan/goal.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Develops an activity plan that accommodates variations in routine and endurance.
	Works with endurance/competitive athletes to develop a safe and effective diabetes self-management plan.
	Assess and reassess patient progress and ability to maintain their individualized activity plan.
MONITORING	
Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Demonstrates correct techniques in monitoring, e.g., blood glucose (BG), ketones, weight (wt), height (ht), waist circumference, body mass index (BMI).
	Identifies clinical measures that are out of range and appropriately refers to team members. Measures that maybe out of range include: A1C, BG, BP, wt, ht, waist circumference, BMI, and ketone testing.
	Reinforces standards of care for diabetes, e.g., preventive care, annual monitoring, follow-up care, diabetes self-management education and support.
	Provides instruction on completing personal health record for glucose monitoring.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Teaches person the benefits of monitoring BP, BG, ketones, wt, ht, waist circumference, and BMI.
	Encourages person to create and maintain a personal health record and discuss results at each visit with primary care provider (PCP) or healthcare team.

Diabetes Educator, Level 1

Demonstrates correct technique for blood glucose and ketone monitoring.
Discusses benefits of monitoring.

Diabetes Educator, Level 2

Identifies appropriate meters for person with special needs.
Serves as local resource on monitoring-related issues.
Teaches and reinforces safe and accurate blood glucose monitoring.
Works with person and diabetes care team to develop appropriate monitoring schedule.
Teaches person to use results of A1C and blood glucose patterns to make informed decisions on diabetes self-management.
Introduces and discusses pattern management, continuous glucose monitoring (CGM), and insulin pumps as appropriate.
Teaches and reinforces safe and appropriate use for CGM and insulin pumps.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3

Evaluates continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) records to achieve and maintain goals in high-risk person.
Works with endurance/competitive athletes to determine effective monitoring plan for training and competitions.
Develops algorithm or protocol-based medication adjustments for changes in meal plan or exercise.
Assesses person's ability and appropriateness to use CGM.
Serves as a resource for other healthcare professionals and community organizations that provide support for individuals who use insulin pumps and to family members or others who support the person.
Assists person with advanced pattern management skills.
Instructs healthcare professionals in various levels of pattern management.
Conducts periodic assessments to evaluate changes in a person's clinical condition, motivation, abilities, and life circumstances that may necessitate the need to reconsider appropriateness of CGM use.

TAKING MEDICATIONS**Level****Objectives****Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1**

Identifies problems/barriers with taking medications as prescribed.
Provides instruction on completing personal health record for medications.
Reviews and reinforces importance of taking medications as prescribed. As appropriate, teach person memory techniques to use as tool to support adherence to medications regimen.
Teaches/reviews safe disposal of sharps.

Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Reinforces safe and effective insulin preparation, storage, and administration under the supervision of a licensed healthcare provider.
	Teaches and reinforces safe use of medications, e.g., storage, expiration dates, travel.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Identifies and explains the differences between prescribed oral and injectable medications for diabetes and co-morbid conditions.
	Discusses safe use and common side effects of prescribed diabetes medications.
	Teaches staff and patients on safe preparation, storage, administration of injectable medications and disposal of syringes and lancets.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Discusses use of over the counter (OTC) medications, supplements, and complementary alternative medicine (CAM) and possible effects on glucose levels.
	Works with person and healthcare team to individualize the diabetes medication regimen.
	Supports person as they consider, initiate, and learn how to use an insulin pump.
	Coordinates the plan of care between the prescriber, insulin pump manufacturer, and insulin pump trainer during pump initiation and ongoing management.
	Obtains certification to provide training in the use of each specific brand and model of insulin pump with which they work.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Works with person and diabetes care team to simplify medication regimens and find lower medication cost opportunities, when need is identified.
	Assesses for potential drug/drug or food/drug interactions and refers to pharmacist or registered dietitian/registered dietitian nutritionist as appropriate.
	Periodically assesses for changes in person's clinical condition, motivation, abilities, and life circumstances that may necessitate the need to reconsider appropriateness of insulin pump therapy.
	Makes medication changes or follows medication adjustment protocols, or makes necessary recommendation to primary care provider.

PROBLEM SOLVING	
Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Assists person with accessing community resources for everyday living support, e.g., housing, food stamps, food assistance programs, prescription assistance, activity centers, etc.
	Assists person in identifying problems and recording questions in personal health record for next healthcare team visit.
	Identifies barriers to achieving successful self-care behaviors and communicates to diabetes team.
	Navigates access to community resources for diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES).
	Supports/reinforces survival skills as appropriate, e.g., monitoring, medications, hypoglycemia/hyperglycemia, sick day management, travel and disaster plans, etc.
	Assists/reinforces plan for contacting healthcare provider.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Maintains a current community resource list to assist clients with everyday living needs, e.g., housing, mental health clinics food and prescription assistance, etc.

Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Reviews and updates local community resources list to keep current.
	Provides instruction on hypoglycemia and hyperglycemia prevention, detection, and treatment.
	Provides guidelines for sick day management, lab or diagnostic testing, surgery and faith-based customs.
	Collaborates with person to develop plan for when to contact diabetes healthcare provider.
	Collaborates with person to develop travel and disaster plans.
	Discusses actual or potential barriers to self-management care.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Evaluates local community resources that support everyday living needs for person.
	Facilitates problem solving/brain-storming techniques to help person identify solutions to barriers in their self-management.
	Implements shared decision-making in order to engage the person in the treatment plan.
Diabetes Educator, Level 3	Identifies changes in medical/mental/physical status that affect the person's ability to follow medical treatment plan and refers to appropriate team member.
HEALTHY COPING	
Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Reviews personal health records for completeness.
	Encourages journaling attitudes and emotions in personal health record as needed.
	Lists signs and symptoms of depression and/or stress.
	Encourages person to share stressors with clinical staff to receive help.
	Navigates access to community resources for DSMES.
	Organizes and facilitates diabetes support groups under the auspices of an organizational or clinical entity.
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Identifies signs and symptoms of depression or diabetes distress and refers to healthcare team.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Distinguishes between physical and emotional effects of blood glucose levels variability.
	Recognizes need for appropriate referrals to behavioral health resources as identified.
	Identifies resources of support and resources to assist with healthy coping.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Distinguishes signs and symptoms of depression and diabetes distress.
	Identifies risk factors for depression and refers to appropriate team member.

Provides ongoing support for person and encourages them to make use of available resources.

- Assesses person's use of available resources and need for additional support.
- Probes for emotional and/or physical factors linked to depression and treats/refers as appropriate.
- Assesses for mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and makes appropriate referrals for follow up care/counseling.
- Assesses for diabetes distress and works with person to address areas that are causing stress.
- Provides or refers to behavioral health professional for support of diabetes-related distress and depression.

REDUCING RISKS

Level

Objectives

- Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1
 - Lists and teaches signs and symptoms of hypo/hyperglycemia.
 - Reinforces the need for basic preventative and risk reduction measures, e.g., foot exams, eye exams, dental exams, lab measurements, smoking cessation, flu vaccines, and immunizations.
 - Identifies principles of sick day management.
 - Reinforces safety in activities in daily living.
 - Uses guidelines to assist person in treating hypoglycemia when needed.
 - Teaches and reviews options for medical alerts identification (ID).
 - Teaches and reviews safe disposal of pen and pump needles, syringes, and lancets.

- Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2
 - Teaches importance of preventive examinations and vaccinations.
 - Teaches importance of and techniques for daily foot care.
 - Teaches how to recognize medical emergencies and when to call for immediate help.

- Diabetes Educator, Level 1
 - Discusses modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors for diabetes and associated complications.
 - Provides information on risk reduction strategies and diabetes standards of care.

- Diabetes Educator, Level 2
 - Assists the person to implement and sustain a diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) plan for optimal health outcomes.
 - Strategizes with person to develop a risk reduction plan.
 - Identifies eating disorders and other psycho-social risks and refers to behavioral health professional.
 - Identifies signs and symptoms of mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and refers to healthcare team.
 - Facilitates training of DSMES program staff and primary care provider (PCP) offices on annual chart reviews to assure standards of care in diabetes prevention (labs, testing, etc.) are being ordered and reviewed with person.

Implements and evaluates an education plan based on assessment of diabetes complications risks and strategies for reducing risks.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3

Facilitates coordination of care across specialty care, facility-based care, and community organizations.

Facilitates the development of personal strategies to accommodate sensory or physical limitation(s), adapting to new self-management demands, and to promote behavior change.

Facilitates training of diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) program staff and primary care provider (PCP) offices on how to interpret annual labs/testing to assess current status of disease progression and needs for additional medical/psycho-social interventions.

Domain 5: Program and Business Management

Competency: Applies principles of program and/or business management to create a climate that supports successful self-management of diabetes.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Identifies the roles of the healthcare team members.
	Works under the direction of a designated healthcare team member.
	Integrates all aspects of person care consistent with laws and regulations governing professional discipline.
	Assists person in obtaining accurate and appropriate diabetes educational materials or resources.
	Develops community network to help market program.
	Participates in program evaluation and quality improvement activities.
	Assists with recruitment and retention of clients and participants in diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES).
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2	Operates within professional lines of responsibility and communication.
	Participates in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, procedures, and protocols relevant to program management.
	Helps identify and review education materials, resources, and equipment needs.
Diabetes Educator, Level 1	Plans for follow-up and initiates referrals to secure appropriate services for person and family.
	Provides diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) referral feedback report on individual clients to the appropriate PCP referral office.
	Follows the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (NSDSMES) and complies with program accreditation/recognition requirements.
Diabetes Educator, Level 2	Uses evidence to guide the delivery of diabetes care and education
	Directs and/or manages all aspects of a diabetes education program
	Incorporates strategies to integrate diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) program into patient-centered medical home (PCMH) model of care.
	Reviews program educational materials/resources and communication pieces to assure they meet current community/cultural needs for DSMES program population.
	Provides coaching and/or mentorship to other members of the diabetes care team
	Oversees program accreditation/recognition requirements.
	Develops plan for recruitment and retention of class participants.
	Provides education to healthcare providers, clinical groups, professionals, paraprofessionals, and the public at large.

Monitors achievement of person self-management goals and other outcome(s) as a way to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational intervention(s), using appropriate measurement techniques.

Reports program evaluation results for administrative support and fiscal stability.

Develops plan and markets DSMES program(s) diabetes education program(s) to key stakeholders.

Develops plan for recruitment and retention of class participants.

Conducts yearly competitive analysis of area DSMES programs to determine most appropriate mix of program services for own program

Supports diabetes coalition building to provide more access and resources for people with diabetes.

Implements and Evaluates program using continuous quality improvement (CQI) methods.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3

Develops and evaluates program management competencies, e.g., problem-solving, interpersonal effectiveness, and organizational awareness, among staff and healthcare providers in a diabetes education program.

Promotes a culture of collegiality that enables members of the multidisciplinary team to feel respected and valued.

Designs innovative strategies to improve program effectiveness and enhance care continuity.

Analyzes the current system. Recognizes system failures and develops strategies for improvement.

Works toward improving population-based interventions.

Mentors other members of the diabetes care team.

Serves as consultant for the development, assessment of program evaluation, and documentation.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Level	Objectives
Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 1	Reinforces the value of self-management skills to clients/patients.
	Demonstrates knowledge of current and new information work-place technologies, e.g., email, data entry, word processing, database management, spreadsheet, slideshow, audio-, video-, web-conferencing.
	Demonstrates knowledge of social media technologies and mobile apps relevant to self-management support of person.
	Demonstrates priority and time management skills.
	Keeps aware of facility/organization changes in diabetes-related policies, procedures, and equipment.
	Complies with facility or organization policies and procedures in addition to DSMES&S program policies and procedures.
	Participates in community screening events.
	Adheres to the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (NSDSMES)
	Adheres to Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) requirements.

Diabetes Paraprofessional, Level 2

- Assists with development, review, and revision of policies, procedures, and protocols.
- Supports an integrated, multidisciplinary team approach to the care and support of patients, families and communities.
- Supports diabetes coalition building to provide more access and resources for people with diabetes.
- Supports advocacy for people with diabetes.

Diabetes Educator, Level 1

- Adheres to professional documentation protocol, Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), medical records release at both the organizational and program levels.
- Provides updated license, registration, certification documents to support diabetes education program accreditation/recognition.
- Communicates activities and outcomes of service through designated channels to the employer and others as appropriate.
- Assists with monitoring and evaluating outcomes of education.
- Uses appropriate billing codes for services provided.
- Follows designated lines of communication per organization.
- Conducts community screening events.

Diabetes Educator, Level 2

- Demonstrates knowledge of sound business practices for diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) program planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Identifies system failures/inefficiencies and develops plan of correction.
- Uses principles of continuous quality improvement (CQI) to seek opportunities to improve quality and efficiency of program services. Conducts CQI strategies per organizational and program identified needs and policies.
- Demonstrates skills in team building, communication and conflict management.
- Balances competing demands on time and financial resources.
- Serves as a role model of leadership, effective communication, and collaboration to the interdisciplinary/multi-professional care team
- Reviews program financial revenue and line item reports, identifies discrepancies, issues and communicates with financial services department or equivalent.

Diabetes Educator, Level 3

- Facilitates leadership practice and team building.
- Uses basic knowledge of business management to plan, develop, and execute successful programming.
- Uses principles of human resource development and planning to create and effectively manage groups of people.
- Represents the diabetes service on relevant committees.
- Communicates with other healthcare professionals in integrated diabetes services across the diabetes care continuum.
- Annually reviews business management with current best practices

Disseminates accurate information about the function and role of the diabetes educator and the service to consumers, other health professionals, and the wider community as appropriate.

Advocates the value of diabetes education across the continuum of healthcare and community services.

Communicates about billing and reimbursement issues with departments of financial services and contracts or comparable departments.

Advocates for diabetes education funding and support.

Facilitates/participates in regional/state community assessment plans as related to access in diabetes education, management and services.

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Appendix 1: Diabetes Paraprofessional Levels

	Diabetes Paraprofessional Level 1	Diabetes Paraprofessional Level 2
Background and Criteria	<p>Level 1 diabetes paraprofessionals are complementary workers who interact with those who have or are affected by diabetes. This level has various roles in the dissemination of information, acquisition of baseline skills and provision of self-management support.</p> <p>The Level 1 designation includes, but is not limited to lay health, community health workers, peer counselors, health navigators, health promoters, health coaches, and assistive school personnel with some level of preparation in a recognized healthcare field.</p>	<p>Level 2 diabetes paraprofessionals are complementary healthcare workers who have a defined role in a certified or recognized diabetes education or prevention program. They may also be aligned with practices that serve a dedicated or focused proportion of diabetes patients.</p> <p>The Level 2 designation includes, but is not limited to, Certified Nursing Assistants, Certified Community Health Workers, Medical Assistants, Dietetic Technicians Registered, Pharmacy Technicians, Physical Therapy Assistants, and Licensed Practical Nurses.</p>
Dreyfus Model Level	Novice to Expert specific to role	Novice to Expert specific to role
Expected and Domain Specific knowledge, skills, adaption (KSA) for diabetes paraprofessionals	<p>Competencies for Diabetes Paraprofessionals</p> <p>Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>Minimal knowledge Practical problem solving Advocacy</p>	<p>Competencies for Diabetes Paraprofessionals</p> <p>Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators</p>

Appendix 2: Diabetes Educator Levels

	Diabetes Educator Level 1	Diabetes Educator Level 2	Diabetes Educator Level 3
Educational Background	<p>Level 1 educators are healthcare providers who interact professionally with diabetes patients to provide the essential knowledge and skills needed for safe self-care.</p> <p>Level 1 designation includes but is not limited to registered nurses (from any accredited entry level education program), advanced practice nurses, registered dietitians (licensed or registered), pharmacists (licensed or registered), exercise physiologists, physical therapists, physicians assistants, and physicians.</p>	<p>Level 2 educators are healthcare providers who have achieved an advanced body of core knowledge and skills related to diabetes education and/or management above that which is required by the profession of origin.</p> <p>Level 2 incorporates those providers who meet the academic, professional, and experiential criteria to qualify for and maintain the CDE® credential. A distinction is made between the newly credentialed educator who is competent in all and proficient in some areas of diabetes knowledge, and the level 3 educators who are at the highest level of expertise in the field.</p>	<p>Level 3 educators are advanced level experts in diabetes education, clinical management and/or research.</p> <p>The Level 3 educator encompasses those involved in integrated, comprehensive, and global management of people with diabetes. This includes, but is not limited to clinicians, researchers, and academics, program managers, healthcare administrators, and consultants. The educator at this level may hold the CDE® credential, meets the academic, professional, and experiential criteria to qualify for and maintain the BC-ADM credential, and may be recognized as a Fellow of the American Association of Diabetes Educators.</p> <p>This level of practice is characterized by care coordination and management, autonomous assessment, problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation of diabetes care. Additionally, it involves excellent communication as well as complex critical thinking and clinical decision-making skills. High level clinical and non-clinical practice is characteristic of this level.</p>

Educator/Clinician Level of Practice	Beginner/Advanced Beginner Basic	Competent/Proficient Intermediate	Expert Advanced
Expected and Domain Specific knowledge, skills, adaption (KSA) for delivery of diabetes education /support	<p>Competencies for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>The educator's focus is on transmitting knowledge related to essential skills for safe, self-management.</p>	<p>Competencies for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>The educator/clinician's focus is on both knowledge and skills to create individualized self-management plans, coordinate care, interpret personal data, conduct focused and/or complete educational assessments and promote successful self-management through adaptation.</p>	<p>Competencies for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>Scope of Practice, Standards of Practice, and Standards of Professional Performance for Diabetes Educators</p> <p>The clinician/educator's focus is on higher level counseling, regimen adjustment (as appropriate for scope of practice), recognizing & prioritizing complex data, and therapeutic problem solving,</p> <p>Focused and/or complete clinical and educational assessments are used to guide decision-making.</p>
Non-Diabetes Foundational Skills for the Delivery of Diabetes Education	<p>Bloom's taxonomy: Remembering, Understanding, Applying</p> <p>Teaching & Learning Skills: Pre-processed delivery models.</p>	<p>Bloom's taxonomy: Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating</p> <p>Teaching & Learning Skills: Individualized assessment & delivery</p> <p>Educator-facilitated group discussion. Differentiate teaching from learning objectives.</p>	<p>Bloom's taxonomy: Analyzing, Evaluating, Creating</p> <p>Teaching & Learning Skills: Creative, Individualized teaching for self-management. Developing and evaluating new models of education.</p>
Novice to Expert Continuum (Dreyfus Model): Expertise develops over time	Entry Level Clinician/Educator	CDE®/Experienced Clinician	BC-ADM/CDE®/FAADE/ Expert

Years in <i>Direct Diabetes Education and/or Management</i>	0 – 2 years of direct care experience in diabetes (percentage of time devoted to diabetes specialty practice).	3 – 5 years post achievement of CDE®/or more experienced in diabetes clinical/ educational care.	More than 5 years of direct engagement in the diabetes as a specialty practice.
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