

Diabetes



FACING THE ISSUES

- *Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, causing more than 200,000 deaths each year.*
- *More than 18 million Americans have diabetes and 5.2 million are unaware that they have the disease.*
- *African American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska Native adults are two to three times more likely to have diabetes than white adults.*
- *Early detection, improved delivery of care, and better education on diabetes self-management help prevent the burden of diabetes and its complications.*

CDC's Prevention Research Centers take a comprehensive approach to diabetes prevention and control.

Helping Communities Reduce the Burden of Diabetes

Several of the Prevention Research Centers' (PRCs) partner communities comprise large racial and ethnic minority groups that are medically underserved and at high risk for diabetes. For example, in one PRC's Latino community, 75% of residents are at a high risk of developing the disease. Researchers at the PRCs are working to increase the capacity of communities to deliver comprehensive programs for preventing and controlling diabetes.

In another PRC community, residents trained as lay health advisors help families find ways to increase their physical activity and improve their selection and preparation of food for diabetes prevention. Families that adopt healthy lifestyles are then trained to mentor other families—a strategy that reinforces the mentors' newly acquired health habits while extending them to others. Some mentors are part of a community advocacy group that promotes a healthy way of life in the community as a whole. Family participants report positive behavior changes and increased motivation

to change due to increased awareness of their behavior. Aspects of the program that were found effective included hands-on activities and goal-setting as well as accountability to and support from the family advisor.

Researchers at another PRC collaborate with local health care service organizations to provide a “one-stop screening” program where women who live on the U.S.–Mexico border receive comprehensive chronic disease screening during a single medical visit. At this visit, lay health workers teach the women about diabetes control. Increased education in diabetes control and other healthy lifestyle behaviors encouraged the community to bring about changes in nutrition and physical activity policies, plan recreation and walking areas, and make nutritious foods available in local stores. Researchers have disseminated the prevention efforts to other U.S.–Mexico border communities and are now conducting evaluations.

Healthy Path is a PRC project designed to help Navajo elders (age



The Prevention Research Centers are a network of academic health centers, partner communities, and public health practitioners that conduct community-based participatory research to prevent disease and disability.

60 or older) make healthy dietary and physical activity choices, specifically for the prevention of diabetes. Researchers collaborated with the Navajo Area Agency on Aging, the Indian Health Service, tribal health educators, and other community and service organizations to develop culturally relevant training and educational materials that promote healthy living among the elderly. The research incorporates the traditional beliefs, values, and foods of the Navajo culture into activities, and the program has reached more than 140 elders. The PRC and its community partners are preparing a full-scale study that could expand the program to the entire Navajo Nation as well as to other American Indian communities in the Southwest.

By working with communities, the prevention researchers are raising awareness of diabetes, educating people about prevention, helping people with diabetes care for themselves, and enhancing the quality of life for people at risk.

Spotlight on Success

In 1999, PRC researchers created the bilingual project, *Si Se Puede!*, or *Yes We Can!* to increase awareness of diabetes and build community capacity to promote healthy lifestyles for diabetes prevention and control among young Latinos and their families. Activities include a gestational diabetes component, nutrition workshops, cooking classes, school-based adolescent risk-reduction programs, and walking clubs for parents. The activities occur at convenient neighborhood locations, and more than 2,800 adults and children age 10 or older have participated in these activities and educational health fairs. Local health care providers volunteer at the fairs to help screen for diabetes and to offer people with diabetes flu vaccinations, blood pressure screening, cholesterol tests, and foot, eye, and dental examinations. Thousands of area residents have been reached by a media campaign that included print and broadcast public service announcements, brochures, posters, and feature articles in local Spanish-language publications. Involvement by community-based organizations, schools, and the media has increased the community's ability to address diabetes.