

Indian Health Diabetes Best Practices—



# Community Advocacy

Indian Health Service Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention  
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Is a Best Practice Community Advocacy Program right for your diabetes program?

➔ Do you want your diabetes program to be better at:

## 1. Raising awareness about diabetes?

Yes  No

**What you will be doing:** Conducting community campaigns ♦ Distributing newsletters and other materials ♦ Making community presentations ♦ Establishing new and fostering existing partnerships to develop, implement, and evaluate effective community-specific programs

**Who will be doing it:** Community program staff ♦ Health care providers ♦ Organization leaders

## 2. Establishing a community advocacy group?

Yes  No

**What you will be doing:** Involving a diverse group of community members and program leaders to develop a shared mission and vision for diabetes ♦ Developing written, specific, and focused objectives for diabetes ♦ Developing an education forum to reach out to community members ♦ Sharing encouraging stories

**Who will be doing it:** Community program staff ♦ Health care providers

## 3. Conducting community needs assessments?

Yes  No

**What you will be doing:** Identifying local needs and priorities ♦ Using public forums to identify community assets, resources, and challenges ♦ Creating reports, presenting findings, and using feedback to develop and track the progress of diabetes programs

**Who will be doing it:** Community program staff ♦ Health care providers

## 4. Identifying leaders who support community advocacy?

Yes  No

**What you will be doing:** Developing letters of agreement for diabetes and health promotion between community leadership and diabetes programs that outline a shared vision and commitment ♦ Assigning tasks and timelines ♦ Providing opportunities for leaders to come together to address diabetes prevention and treatment

**Who will be doing it:** Community program staff ♦ Health care providers ♦ Organization leaders

## 5. Providing community education?

Yes  No

**What you will be doing:** Using evidence-based community guidelines to develop and implement community education and health promotion programs ♦ Using talking circles to provide an opportunity for people to talk freely about diabetes ♦ Orienting patients and the community to the health care system and providers ♦ Offering culturally-appropriate health-related information to patients

**Who will be doing it:** Community program staff ♦ Health care providers

➔ If you answered "Yes" to many of these questions, go to page 2 to learn how a Best Practice Community Advocacy Program can benefit your diabetes program!

## What is community advocacy?

Community advocacy for diabetes is any action directed at developing a positive policy environment for diabetes, raising awareness of diabetes, and building support to address diabetes.

## Why is community advocacy important to American Indian and Alaska Native communities?

- Community advocacy offers the community with the opportunity to take action to improve health.
- Community advocacy encourages dialogue, negotiation, and consensus among all community members.
- Community advocacy raises awareness and reduces the stigma associated with diabetes.
- Community advocacy mobilizes and coordinates resources for community-based diabetes initiatives.
- Community participation is important to the success and effectiveness of diabetes programs because sustained, positive change cannot be achieved without the support, commitment, and involvement of the community.

## The good news about community advocacy...

Community advocacy provides opportunities for all segments of the community—including decision and policy makers, tribal leaders, professional groups, the media, and individuals—to share news and support one another in efforts to promote health and prevent diabetes.



"Our Indian people are in here all the time, sometimes not just for check-ups or medical attention, but to find out when the diabetes support group will meet next. The center is a meeting place. They like to come here."

—Lori Kennedy, Urban Inter-tribal Center of Texas

A Best Practice Community Advocacy Program will require a coordinated approach. Here are some tips on how health care providers, community programs, health care administrators, and tribal leadership can work together.

### ➔ Working together to improve community advocacy:

#### 1. Who can help?

**Ask for and enlist support from:** Tribal and community leaders ♦ Health care providers ♦ Clinic administrators ♦ Individuals ♦ The media ♦ Decision and policy makers

#### 2. Why is it important to work together?

**Working with clinic, community, and leadership partners will help you:** Leverage resources ♦ Avoid duplicating services ♦ Share staff, ideas, and resources ♦ Get support for your common goal of improving the health of your community

#### 3. How can you work together?

**Work with your partners to:** Share what you are doing ♦ Determine what each partner will do ♦ Assign tasks and timelines ♦ Plan and establish programs and activities ♦ Develop and implement goals and objectives ♦ Design evaluation plans ♦ Maintain regular contact with each other

