

Introduction

Why diabetes must be a priority for each of us:

A letter from the NDEP Community Interventions Workgroup

Dear Community Member:

Did you know that 16 million people in the United States are currently living with diabetes and that this disease is diagnosed in more than one-half million people each year? One-third of those with diabetes don't even know they have it because diabetes is a silent thief. Symptoms rarely develop until complications develop. If untreated, diabetes can lead to severe complications such as blindness, kidney and heart disease, stroke, and lower-limb amputations.

The American population is growing more ethnically diverse, aging, gaining weight, and becoming less physically active. As a result, there will be a greater proportion of minorities who are disproportionately affected by diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease for which there is presently no known cure. Year after year, day after day, diabetes is quietly, diligently hard at work forever changing the lives of people with the disease. Helping people with diabetes and their communities learn to control the disease is the only way to make a difference today.

However, *there is good news*. Scientific evidence now shows that treatment of diabetes with diet, physical activity, and new medicines can prevent or delay much of the illness and complications associated with diabetes.

The NDEP has a message for your community: by learning to take control of diabetes, there is hope in the battle against this disease.

You have the power to help your community win the fight against diabetes!

The NDEP invites you to use this guide to begin making a difference in the lives of people with diabetes and those who love them in your community.

Sincerely,

The NDEP Community Interventions Workgroup

Facts:

Source: The Lions Club

- Every year, 170,000 Americans die of diabetes or its complications.
- Every week, 12,000 people learn that they have diabetes.
- Every day, 144 people with diabetes go blind.
- Every hour, three people with diabetes must have a foot, ankle, or leg amputated to save their lives.
- Every minute, 20 people with diabetes undergo kidney dialysis.
- Today, someone with diabetes will die from its complications.

