

DIABETES PROGRAMS IN ONTARIO

July 22, 2008

Diabetes is a serious chronic disease that is costly to both the affected individual and society. Patients living with diabetes are required to self-manage their disease every day by making healthy lifestyle decisions and in some cases, by taking medication.

Because of the complex nature of the disease, effective diabetes management and prevention of serious complications requires access to a range of health-care services.

The Ontario government is launching a comprehensive diabetes strategy that will prevent, manage and treat diabetes care. Ontarians will benefit through improved health promotion, diabetes prevention, increased access to diabetes care and more services to help patients manage the disease.

The government currently funds a number of programs that focus on diabetes education, early intervention, effective prevention of complications and resources for diabetes patients.

The new strategy builds on these programs and on internationally accepted best practices and the recommendations of the Diabetes Management Expert Panel. This Panel was established by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in 2006 to provide advice on improving diabetes care in Ontario.

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Pediatric Diabetes Initiative

Established in 2001, the Pediatric Diabetes Initiative supports children with type 1 diabetes and their families through diabetes education, treatment and help with ongoing management of the illness through 34 regional programs across Ontario.

Through these programs, children are matched with a team of health care professionals including registered nurses, dieticians and social workers. More than 90 per cent or about 6900 children with diabetes in Ontario receive services from this network.

Diabetes Complications Prevention Strategy

The Diabetes Complications Prevention Strategy provides basic level diabetes education programs in southern Ontario. Funding is provided to 98 hospital and community health organizations for local programs.

Through each program, a team of educators is available to teach diabetes patients the skills they need to help them care for themselves and effectively manage their diabetes. This team is comprised of a physician, nurse and dietitian. It may also have a social worker, clinical psychologist, chiropodist, pharmacist and/or physiotherapist.

As well as promoting self-care, the team develops an individualized management plan for each patient with the aim of relieving diabetes symptoms, preventing or treating complications, and improving the quality of life.

Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Strategy

Aboriginals are three to five times more likely to get diabetes than the rest of the population. The Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Strategy sets out an integrated approach to diabetes prevention, care and treatment, education, research and coordination.

Established in 1993, the Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative delivers culturally-specific diabetes education program for Aboriginal diabetes workers and administers a foot care program. The initiative also provides diabetes education, prevention and management through on- and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations and independent First Nations in southern Ontario.

Northern Diabetes Health Network

The Northern Diabetes Health Network aims to address the high rate of the disease in northern Ontario.

The network funds 39 adult diabetes education programs in large and small northern communities, helping to ensure that people with diabetes and their families are given tools to manage their condition and improve quality of life. These programs in northern Ontario have provided services to over 53,000 people with diabetes. Diabetes educators travel by car, boat and small plane to 137 rural and remote northern communities.

Assistive Devices Program (ADP)

The Assistive Devices Program's (ADP) mandate is to provide consumer centered support and funding to Ontario residents who have long-term physical disabilities. The program provides access to over 8,000 types of personalized assistive devices appropriate for the individual's basic needs, including insulin pumps, wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs and visual aids.

In December 2006, the Ontario government implemented a program to fund insulin pump therapy to children and youth aged 18 and under who met the clinical criteria. Funding was then extended for those patients in the program turning 19 while the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care established an expert panel to advise the government on appropriate criteria to give adults who qualify access to insulin pumps.

Today, about 1700 children and youth benefit from the Ministry-funded insulin pump therapy and in September, 2008, over 1300 adults will receive funded insulin pumps every year.

Diabetes Prevention in Ontario

EatRight Ontario

EatRight Ontario (ERO) provides Ontarians with access to nutrition information from Registered Dietitians through both a telephone and web-based service. ERO receives inquiries about diabetes and provides information and advice on diabetes prevention and management. The telephone service serves callers in over 110 languages. Ontarians can call ERO toll-free at 1-877-510-5102 or access information online at Ontario.ca/EatRight.

HealthyOntario.com

HealthyOntario.com provides Ontario residents with access to a wide range of high quality information on health, disease prevention and health care services. HealthyOntario.com

also provides access health assessment tools, in-depth feature articles by leading healthcare and medical experts, medical information, as well as links to other Ontario and not-for-profit health and wellness websites.

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