



# Florida Blue: A Leader in Diabetes Prevention

## Background

Diabetes is a growing problem in America today, and the prevalence of the condition is increasing. Today, 29.1 million people have diabetes – about one out of every 11 people in the country.<sup>1</sup> Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disorder characterized by the body's inability to produce insulin – making up 5 percent of diagnosed cases of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body cannot properly use insulin - one in three people may develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetimes.<sup>2</sup> Type 2 diabetes is common among older, overweight people, and those with a family history of the disease.<sup>3</sup> Diabetes is also associated with heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, lower-limb amputations, and adult-onset blindness.

### Key Takeaways

- Florida Blue is delivering the National Diabetes Prevention Program through its Better You Diabetes Prevention Program, formerly known as My Healthy Turnaround.
- The Better You Diabetes Prevention Program is designed to help participants lose a minimum of 5 percent of their body weight over six months and maintain their weight loss for another six months to reduce the risk of prediabetes developing into type 2 diabetes.
- Florida Blue has partnered with the YMCA of the USA and Solera Health to provide options for participants in the program to choose from.
- For members with prediabetes or at high risk for type 2 diabetes, Florida Blue offers the program as a covered benefit for Medicare Advantage members and as a wellness program for fully-insured commercial group members.

In 2012, diabetes cost an estimated \$245 billion in total medical costs and lost work and wages. Data also indicates that the risk of death for adults with diabetes is 50 percent higher than for those without the condition.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the high prevalence of diabetes, it is estimated that 86 million people – more than one in three adults – have prediabetes. Prediabetes means that a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal – but not high enough to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that 90 percent of those with the condition do not know they have prediabetes.<sup>6</sup>

## The National Diabetes Prevention Program

The National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) supports an evidence-based intervention that allows purchasers, payers, and providers to help their patients with prediabetes or at high risk for type 2 diabetes prevent or delay onset of type 2 diabetes. The intervention is founded on the science of the Diabetes Prevention Program research study and multiple translation studies.<sup>7</sup> These studies showed that making modest behavior changes helped participants lose 5 to 7 percent of their body weight and reduced the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent in adults with prediabetes (71 percent for people over 60 years old).<sup>8</sup>

The year-long lifestyle change program



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supported by the National DPP involves group sessions offered in-person or online by trained lifestyle coaches using a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-approved curriculum. The program encourages and provides practical strategies for eating healthier, adding physical activity to daily routines, and improving coping skills. The program is offered by a variety of organizations including community organizations, health insurers, employers, health care providers, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and others throughout the United States.<sup>9</sup> These organizations strive to build a workforce of trained lifestyle coaches that can deliver the program effectively, ensure quality and standardized reporting, and ultimately help participants lose weight and maintain their weight loss through the duration of the program and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

The CDC developed the Diabetes Prevention Recognition Program (DPRP) to provide a standard, data-driven approach to recognize organizations that have demonstrated the ability to effectively deliver the program. The DPRP adds credibility and helps assure that people are referred to CDC-recognized programs that meet quality standards and achieve the outcomes proven to prevent or delay onset of type 2 diabetes.<sup>11</sup>

## Florida Blue

Florida has an above-average rate of diabetes compared to other states, with 9.4 percent of Floridians having diabetes compared to 9.3 percent nationally.<sup>12</sup> Florida also has a large senior population, and type 2 diabetes is more common among older individuals.

Florida Blue is the largest health plan in Florida, with over five million members. Florida Blue offers health insurance for individuals under 65, Medicare Advantage plans, and commercial group plans.

Florida Blue recognized the need to offer a diabetes prevention program to help people throughout the state improve their health by preventing prediabetes from developing into type 2 diabetes. Florida Blue is part of America's Health Insurance Plans' cooperative agreement with CDC and has introduced the Diabetes Prevention Program under Better You, Florida Blue's Health and Wellness program.

## Better You's Diabetes Prevention Program

Adhering to CDC guidelines and encouraging healthy, long-lasting lifestyle change, Better You is a year-long program designed to help participants lose a minimum of 5 percent of their body weight. Participants must attend at least 16 sessions – delivered approximately weekly - within the first six months of the program. Participants then must attend at least six sessions over the next six months, at least one per month, and are expected to maintain their weight loss. Throughout the year-long program, participants are given advice and coaching on healthy eating and coping skills, and are encouraged to increase moderate physical activity to 150 minutes per week.

To offer these programs for many customers in many communities, Florida Blue partnered with YMCA and Solera Health to provide several different options for participants to choose what works best for them. These vendors provide a variety of classes and coaches to offer flexibility that meets participants' different needs. Classes are available at numerous locations throughout the state, including at YMCA facilities, employer worksites, online, patient-centered medical homes, and in Florida Blue-operated retail clinics.

### Program Delivery

Florida Blue's Diabetes Prevention Program was launched in 2013 for employees of the health plan. The program was expanded to Florida Blue members across the state in 2014. Florida Blue members in the Jacksonville, Orlando, Pensacola, Tallahassee, Tampa, and South Florida regions have access to the program at no cost. To be eligible for participation, individuals must be at least 18 years old, be overweight (with a BMI greater than or equal to 25; 24 for Asian Americans), and have established risk factors for type 2 diabetes, such as being age 45 or older, having a family history of the disease, engaging in low levels of physical activity, or previously giving birth to a baby weighing more than nine pounds.<sup>13</sup> Others at risk include people with a fasting blood glucose between 100 and 125, a previous gestational diabetes diagnosis, or an HbA1c between 5.7 and 6.4 percent.<sup>14</sup> Florida Blue promotes the program through direct mail, email, web notices, and information provided to physicians, group practices, and other providers.

The program is delivered by lifestyle coaches who are trained on a CDC-approved curriculum. The curriculum provides the coaches with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively deliver the program. The lifestyle coach's ability to support participants, provide guidance, and help groups work together is essential for a successful lifestyle change program.<sup>15</sup> Coaches may be health professionals, such as nutritionists or nurses, or lay health workers such as community health workers.

One of the key differentiating factors for Florida Blue is the delivery of the program through its community-based retail centers. These retail centers are staffed by clinicians and customer service staff who provide information and services for members and the community. Nurse practitioners are on-site to assist people

with preventive screenings, health risk assessments, and counseling. Care Consultants help prepare members for medical services and programs like Better You. Located across the state, these sites offer a community-based, in-person learning environment for lifestyle change classes without being directly tied to an employer or patient-centered medical home.<sup>16</sup>

### Physician Impact

Florida Blue also has patient-centered medical homes (PCMHs) as part of its provider network and has worked with those practices to make them aware of Better You and what patients are eligible for the program. Physicians may refer members to the program who receive care through a PCMH and meet the eligibility criteria.

Physician referrals can be a very effective way to encourage individuals to commit to the year-long lifestyle change program. The PCMH, which emphasizes coordination of care and preventive services, is well-positioned to encourage people to participate in the program, because primary care providers will monitor their patients' progress. With a physician referral, individuals are able to enroll in Better You and attend classes on-site at the physician practice or at a local YMCA, whichever they prefer.

Florida Blue originally launched its PCMH-based diabetes prevention program in 2014 with the intent to expand to more PCMHs in Jacksonville, Tampa, and Orlando.

### Partnerships

Florida Blue has made Better You available to 20 employer groups as of December 2016. Across these groups, 1,055 people have attended at least one session, 805 (76 percent) have attended at least four sessions, and 545

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(52 percent) have attended at least nine sessions. In this group of participants, a total of 170 participants (31 percent) achieved the weight loss goal of 5 percent or more.

In addition to offering Better You in its community-based retail centers, physician practices, and on-site for employers, Florida Blue works with multiple partners to augment its capacity and geographic reach in order to best serve its members. Florida Blue began enrolling participants with the YMCA in 2013. To date, 1,876 participants enrolled in the program, and 1,187 participants (63 percent) attended at least 16 classes during the first six months of the program (as defined by the CDC DPRP). Of those who reached the attendance milestone, 475 people achieved the target weight loss goal during the first phase of the program.

Starting in 2017, Florida Blue partnered with Solera Health, an organization which offers a network of prevention programs, including CDC-recognized organizations delivering the National DPP lifestyle change program. Florida Blue's partnership with Solera Health allows its members to select the lifestyle change program that will work best for them. The options include CDC-recognized organizations such as Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, and virtual technology-based programs. So far, Florida Blue has enrolled 168 of its members with Solera Health, and 96 people (57 percent) have attended at least 16-classes; 49 have achieved and sustained the weight loss goal of 5 percent or more.

## Scaling and Sustainability

In January 2017, Florida Blue started offering their Diabetes Prevention Program as a covered benefit for Medicare Advantage

beneficiaries, and as a wellness program for fully-insured commercial group members.

Florida Blue also hopes to expand the program in the coming years. The health plan is looking to expand into government employee markets. Future iterations of the program could include incentives for participants to encourage people to maintain lifestyle changes long-term.

## Conclusion

Florida Blue leadership is committed to offering the National DPP lifestyle change program to its members in convenient settings, with multiple delivery methods including PCMHs, community-based retail centers, on-site with employers, at local YMCAs, and through Solera's network of CDC-recognized program providers. This is an encouraging success story where Florida Blue tested multiple approaches and created a sustainable program to improve the health of the diverse population it serves. With a mission to "help people and communities achieve better health," Florida Blue is acting on its principles by delivering an effective, high-quality, sustainable program to help Florida residents prevent type 2 diabetes and live healthier lives.

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### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/statsreport14/diabetes-infographic.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/statsreport14/diabetes-infographic.pdf>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/prediabetes-type2/index.html>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/statsreport14/diabetes-infographic.pdf>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/prediabetes-type2/index.html>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/statsreport14/diabetes-infographic.pdf>

<sup>7</sup><https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1282458>

<sup>8</sup>[https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program/why\\_offer.html](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program/why_offer.html)

<sup>9</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/about/index.html>

<sup>10</sup>[https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/ndpp\\_infographic.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/ndpp_infographic.pdf)

<sup>11</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/dprp-standards.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://gis.cdc.gov/grasp/diabetes/DiabetesAtlas.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.floridablue.com/agents/florida-blue-helps-providers-promote-member-diabetes-program>

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/postcurriculum\\_session14.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/pdf/postcurriculum_session14.pdf)

<sup>15</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevention/lifestyle-program/staffing-training.html>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.bcbsfl.com/DocumentLibrary/SalesCommunications/content/Retail%20Center%20Care%20and%20Service%20Flyer%20Member%20Tool%20Kit%20\(ENGLISH\).pdf](http://www.bcbsfl.com/DocumentLibrary/SalesCommunications/content/Retail%20Center%20Care%20and%20Service%20Flyer%20Member%20Tool%20Kit%20(ENGLISH).pdf)