

## November is Diabetes Awareness Month

In support of American Diabetes Month, sponsored by the American Diabetes Association, pharmacists in Maryland and Nationwide want to remind Marylanders of the pharmacists' role in combating the illness, saving lives and saving patients' money.

Diabetes is a confusing, complicated and frustrating disease that affects over 24 million Americans<sup>1</sup>. It takes teamwork and dedication to battle Diabetes. This is where a pharmacist has the most value. As the most accessible healthcare provider and as the medication experts, pharmacists are on virtually every street corner with knowledge and resources to keep patients with diabetes on track to a long, healthy and happy life.

Pharmacists are the medication experts. They know all about diabetes medications as well as the medications for the diseases that often accompany diabetes, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease. To successfully manage medications, side effects, outcomes and complications, pharmacists are one of the best resources at your disposal. Some pharmacists have specialized to become Certified Diabetes Educators (CDE) and can have an active role in diabetes care. Others have skills in Medication Therapy Management (MTM), ensuring the most effective and affordable care for their patients. Furthermore, all pharmacists can educate about medications, demonstrate glucometers, take blood pressure, and explain lab results.

Involving a pharmacist in Diabetes care also has proven financial benefit. In 2007, Diabetes cost the United States \$176 billion<sup>1</sup> in direct and indirect costs. Controlling and managing Diabetes while preventing complications with help save money. Pharmacists can help with this.

Pharmacists have proven their value. An example is the Asheville Project, a 5 year study in Asheville, North Carolina where pharmacist provided pharmaceutical care services through community pharmacies. The results showed improved health outcomes and cost savings.<sup>2</sup> Another study that expands this theory is currently taking place - the Diabetes Ten City Challenge. This study similar to the Asheville Project, but expands the concept of pharmacists managing Diabetes to ten cities across the United States. One of those cities is Cumberland, Maryland, which in association with local pharmacist through the Maryland P3 Program (Pharmacist, Patients, Partnerships), the Maryland Pharmacists Association and The University of Maryland School of Pharmacy, is helping over 250 Maryland residents.<sup>3</sup>

Chances are you know someone with Diabetes or you yourself have Diabetes. Young, middle-aged, pregnant women and older Americans are all burdened with daily blood glucose checks, multiple medications, and insulin injections.

Help friends, family members or yourself get the most benefit from your medications and improve overall quality of life.

If you know or think you are at risk for Diabetes, talk to your local pharmacist today!

Know Your Medicine, Know Your Pharmacist.

Word Count: 441

References:

1. National Diabetes Fact Sheet. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2007.
2. Cranor CW, Bunting BA, Christensen DB. The Asheville Project: Long-Term Clinical and Economic Outcomes of a Community Pharmacy Diabetes Care Program. *J Am Pharm Assoc.* 2003;43:173–84.
3. Cumberland, Maryland Diabetes Ten City Challenge Fact Sheet. American Pharmacists Association Foundation. Washington, D.C.

For more information look to the following resources:

[www.mpha.org](http://www.mpha.org)

[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)

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