



August 12, 2014 ■ Issue 111

## Patient Education and Empowerment Can Improve Health Outcomes for Diabetes Patients

Nearly one in 11 Americans have diabetes, a chronic condition associated with serious complications, but new holistic approach designed to educate and empower patients with diabetes can significantly improve their health, according to a new [study](#) led by diabetes nurse educators from New York-Presbyterian Hospital's Ambulatory Care Network.

Participants in the study enrolled in a Diabetes Self-Management and Education program (DSME) to reduce their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

As part of the DSME program's multifaceted approach, participants underwent a comprehensive initial assessment and received four 30-minute individual sessions with a diabetes nurse educator, followed by group sessions focused on reinforcing self-management behaviors and individual goals. Individual patient sessions concentrated on helping patients achieve their goals, while group sessions helped give patients a deeper understanding of their condition and the implications of their actions.

The program's components concentrated on seven self-care behaviors: healthy eating, physical activity, monitoring vital signs, medication management, problem solving, healthy coping and risk reduction. Using the holistic medical home approach to care, patients were referred to specialty services, such as endocrinologists, ophthalmologists, podiatrists, dentists, dietitians, social workers and other providers on an as needed basis.

After 15 months, participants on average lowered their A1C levels by 67 percent and their LDL cholesterol levels by 53 percent. Twenty-five percent of participants had blood pressure at the end of the study, versus 32 percent beforehand.

According to the study, nurse educators forge a strong bond with patients to help them build a foundation of knowledge and a sense of control over their condition, which allows them to manage the myriad challenges they face in making powerful changes to keep diabetes under control and avoid complications.

Educators were able to go into patients' homes, speak their language and identify opportunities for behavioral changes. Educators also partnered with providers, dietitians, nurses and community health workers to implement the program.

## **Save the Date**

Please note: While the information below is a list of planned programs for 2014, at this time not all programs can be accessed online for registration.

Sept. 18 Adverse Drug Events

Sept. 22 Annual Leadership Summit

Sept. 29 Geriatric Emergency Department Guidelines

Nov. 19 2015 Joint Commission Hospital Accreditation Update

[Click here to register.](#)

CA56081214