

Building Partnerships with Health Care Professionals

Health care professionals, including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, and diabetes educators, are important partners for your lifestyle change program. They can recommend that eligible patients enroll in the program, as well generate interest and help you leverage key resources within your community.

How do I get started?

Begin by building a list of contacts for clinics, physician offices, and hospitals in your area. Before you contact health care professionals to ask them to become involved, develop talking points about your program, why it is needed in the community, and action steps that they can take to partner with you.

Critical messages to stress with health care professionals include the evidence-base behind the lifestyle change program in lowering the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and local program details. For example, is it offered at a convenient time and location, what is the cost to participants, and what are the eligibility requirements for participants?

What are potential calls to action?

Build a team of health care professionals committed to supporting the efforts of the National Diabetes Prevention Program, and create opportunities for individuals to play specific roles in championing your program. Health care professionals can become program champions by:

- Raising awareness among their patients through:
 - testing patients for prediabetes and recommending that those at high risk for type 2 diabetes enroll in your lifestyle change program.
 - assigning someone in their office to follow up with patients who are at high risk for type 2 diabetes to facilitate their enrollment in the program.
 - posting program information in their offices and on their websites.

- Raising awareness among their peers and the community through:
 - reaching out to colleagues to encourage program involvement.
 - conducting information sessions for peers.
 - acting as a spokesperson for the media and professional associations.
 - placing information about your program in provider newsletters.
 - participating in special events to raise awareness about your program.

How do I get the word out to health care professionals?

To build rapport with health care professionals, it's important to meet them in person. Let them know that you are dedicated to decreasing the incidence of type 2 diabetes in your community.

- Schedule brief, informal meetings at clinics, doctors' offices, and hospitals. Talk to the health care professionals as well as the office staff.
- Reach out to local chapters of professional associations and ask if you can make presentations at their regular meetings.
- Provide them with printed information with the details and location of your program.
- Offer to provide fliers that they can hand out to patients and forms that they can use to recommend patients who meet eligibility requirements enroll in the program.

How can I keep health care professionals engaged?

Regular communication is key. Identify preferred modes of communication for the health care professionals in your community and stay connected!

- Follow up with health care professionals who have recommended that patients enroll in your program and share updates on your overall outcomes.
- Recognize health care professional champions publicly (for example, award them with a certificate of appreciation at an event.)

For more information, see "Outreach Tips" and the customizable outreach tools that are available in the Learn/Resources section of the online learning community, [Common Ground](#).