

15th Annual American Diabetes Rainbow Gala
September 16, 2010
Skylands Manor, Ringwood, NJ

Acknowledgements

Thank you Jay for the kind introduction

It is a pleasure to be here this evening. It is truly an honor to receive this recognition from the American Diabetes Association.

Thank you to the American Diabetes Association for your efforts to prevent and cure prevent diabetes and to help those struggling with this disease. Diabetes can be a debilitating disease, but it is a disease that can be prevented and managed. Thankfully, we are making progress on the prevention and treatment of diabetes. However, there is more work to do and that is what brings us here tonight.

Diabetes

Chances are everyone knows someone who has diabetes.

- Nearly 24 million Americans have diabetes
- And every 24 hours more than 4,000 adults are diagnosed with diabetes and approximately 200 people die from diabetes
- In NJ it is estimated that more than 440,000 residents have been diagnosed with diabetes, and an additional 178,000 have the disease but are unaware of it

In the nation and New Jersey, diabetes is not only common; it is also costly and has significant impact on health.

New research estimates the economic burden of diabetes and pre-diabetes at \$218 billion in the form of higher medical costs and lost productivity in 2007.

As shocking as this figure is, it reflects only the economic costs. This cost estimate does not speak to the suffering endured by people with diabetes and their high rates of heart disease, stroke, lower-extremity amputations, kidney disease and blindness. And it doesn't reflect the number of lives lost each year due to this disease.

And we know that the burden of diabetes is not evenly distributed among New Jerseyans.

- Blacks are nearly twice as likely to have diabetes than whites
- Hispanics have 10% higher prevalence than whites
- Deaths from diabetes are nearly 3 times higher among Blacks and nearly 1.5 times higher among Hispanics than among Whites
- End Stage Renal Disease incidence is nearly 2 times higher among Blacks compared to Whites

Minority and Multicultural Health Month

Given those startling disparities, it is particularly fitting that this gala coincides with New Jersey's celebration of Minority and Multicultural Health Month. This month I am traveling across the state to bring greater attention to health disparities and give residents the tools to manage their health.

This September, community-based organizations and healthcare agencies are holding 50 events across the state that include health screenings, educational sessions and immunization clinics. Many of these events offer glucose screening, which is critically important to earlier identification and treatment of diabetes.

Outreach and Prevention

Our Department is also able to support the work of our community partners in addressing diabetes in their communities. We have awarded grants to 5 statewide agencies to identify and treat minority populations, including Korean, Latino and migrant communities, African Americans, and Native Americans, who have diabetes. Each agency received \$100,000 to screen annually at least 1,000 people for diabetes and ensure that those who need it get the appropriate medical attention and education for diabetes. These grants allow us to bring a health promotion program into communities where we need to reduce health disparities

Also, most of our FQHCs participate in the National Health Disparities Collaborative which is designed to ensure access to all recommended preventive and primary care services to better manage diabetes and the co-morbidities.

Additionally, we are also working to implement the Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP). This program, developed by Stanford University, helps people develop the skills and self-confidence for day-to-day management of the disease and its impact on their lives. The Department and its community partners are just beginning to implement this program in New Jersey. Other states have used the program and their residents who participated reported improved health status and fewer trips to the ER, so we are hoping to replicate this success in our state.

Positive Outcomes

Our collaborations with nonprofits, healthcare and community partners have resulted in some good news in terms of addressing the impact of diabetes on New Jerseyans.

- Since 1997 the rate of lower limb amputations has been reduced by 50%.
- Also since that time, the non-ESRD kidney disease hospitalization rate has been reduced by 20%
- And the rate of diabetes related vision disorders that require hospitalization has been reduced by 38%.

These rate reductions reflect improvements in treatment of diabetes in our state. So yes we are making progress and we should celebrate that progress. But we have more work to not only treat diabetes but to end health disparities.

Closing

Our commitment, creativity, ingenuity, collaboration and intellect will all be needed to ensure those affected by diabetes get the treatment they need. As I look out at this sea of people—dedicated, smart, passionate and persistent—the future looks bright in your hands.

Thank you for this honor, I see this recognition as a call to renew our state’s commitment to increase awareness of this disease, educate the public about the risk factors and prevention and ensure ALL New Jerseyans get the care they need to stay healthy.

Thank you.