



MAY is Health Vision Month

NMA Diabetes Education Program Launches its New Website

www.nmadiabetesnet.org

MAY is Healthy Vision Month

One of the objectives for the *Healthy People 2010 Vision* is to reduce the visual impairments due to diabetic *retinopathy*. May is recognized as Healthy Vision Month.

Patients with diabetes need to be vigilant in caring for their eyes, just as much as taking their medications, exercising, having regular foot examinations, watching their diet and as well as caring for their gums and teeth.¹ To accomplish this diabetic patients should receive a dilated eye exam at least once a year.²

Retinopathy

Retinopathy can cause vision loss and blindness. According to the National Eye Health Education Program's resource, "Diabetic Eye Disease: An Educator's Guide," all people with diabetes – type 1 and type 2 – can develop diabetic retinopathy.

The longer you have diabetes the more at risk you are for developing *retinopathy*. "Over time, high blood sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol can damage the tiny blood vessels in your retina. These blood vessels may swell and become blocked. New weaker blood vessels may form. When these changes occur, a person has developed some level of diabetic retinopathy."²

Diabetic patients should receive a dilated eye exam along with a visual acuity exam and a *Tonometry* (a test to measure the pressure inside your eye).² If caught early, diabetic retinopathy can be treated through laser surgery. Almost one-third of people with type 2 diabetes have some retinopathy at the time they are diagnosed.²

To learn more diabetic retinopathy, click the link to the Diabetic Eye Disease: An Educator's Guide, developed by the National Eye Health Education Program (NEHEP),² (**NOTE TO JENNIFER: hyperlink to http://www.nei.nih.gov/diabeteseducation/materials/DED_Flipchart_ENGLISH.pdf**) a patient education tool for health professionals and community-based educators who work with people who have diabetes. To obtain information about other complications of type 2 diabetes, visit the new NMA Diabetes Education Program's website described below.

The NMA Diabetes Education Program Web Site

The National Diabetes Education Program of the National Medical Association (NMA) is proud to announce the launch of its new website.

Visit www.nmadiabetesnet.org today!

The aim of this website is to promote diabetes prevention and control education to NMA members, their patients, and the general public. Additionally, the website will highlight the activities of the six diabetes coalitions created to carry out the objectives of the NMA Diabetes Education Program.

The Diabetes Education Program

The NMA Diabetes Education Program, funded by a five-year cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is entering the third year of grant activities. To address the disproportionate prevalence of diabetes in the Black community, the program has six coalition sites (in five of the six NMA regions) conducting diabetes outreach and education in their respective communities. The coalition cities are Atlanta, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Pine Bluff (Arkansas), and Washington (District of Columbia) (**Objective #1**). The Program continues to focus on its additional three educational objectives that are to:

- Provide outreach, such as screenings, community workshops, and media campaigns (**Objective #2**);
- Educate patients on preventative behaviors, as well as healthy disciplines to maintain good health while affected by the disease; and, equally important (**Objective #3**);
- Educate NMA physicians (**Objective #4**).

Contact Us

The NMA Diabetes Education Program is coordinated by Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., Principal Investigator; Ivonne` Fuller, N.R.P.P., M.P.A., Program Administrator; and Roslyn A. Douglas, M.A., Program Coordinator. For information or to assist with this initiative, contact rdouglas@nmanet.org.

Visit the new NMA Diabetes Education Program website!
www.nmadiabetesnet.org

- 1 Control the ABCs of Diabetes. http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/Final_Poster_5-04.pdf
- 2 National Eye Health Education Program – Diabetic Eye Disease: An Educator’s Guide <http://catalog.nei.nih.gov/productcart/pc/viewPrd.asp?idcategory=31&idproduct=128>