

## **PREVENTING MEDICATION ERRORS WITH UP-TO-DATE GUIDANCE**

*New York coalition develops and distributes a pocket guide to diabetes medication*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Managing diabetes can require the use of an ever-changing array of medicines such as insulin, oral drugs, or newer injectable agents.
- In New York forty percent of reported medication errors happen during the administration process with nursing the number one discipline involved.
- Nurses at a hospital which is part of a New York capitol-area coalition member agency, requested up-to-date guidance on identifying diabetes medications, classes, actions and side effects in order to more safely administer these medications to their patients.
- Reducing medication errors means better care for people with diabetes and fewer drug-related complications.

### **Program**

- A guide to diabetes medications that regulate blood sugar was developed by members of the Capital Region Coalition for Diabetes Prevention and Control.
- Called the *Quick Reference Guide to Diabetes Oral Agents & Insulins*, it contains a comprehensive table of insulin types, actions, onsets, peaks and durations as well as information on timing of administration. The table for oral medicines and the newer injectable agents includes class, actions and key precautions.
- The guide also provides referral information on diabetes self-management education including important local partner resources. Diabetes self-management education in community gathering places is recommended preventive step for adults with type 2 diabetes.
- The tri-folded, laminated format of the guide makes it suitable for carrying in a pocket to facilitate regular use. Over 1500 cards were distributed in 12 upstate New York counties.

### **Impact**

- Widespread acceptance and high demand for the pocketguide allowed the coalition to far exceed its goal for distribution of this needed resource supporting safe medication administration for people with diabetes.
- Distribution includes health care staff in four hospitals, three schools of nursing, public health departments and physician offices, as well as the Seven County Diabetes Network.
- An annual update and distribution is planned to keep this needed resource effective and functional.

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