

DIABETES ALERT DAY INCREASES AWARENESS OF DIABETES

Local health departments assess risk and refer participants to helpful resources

Public Health Problem

- The symptoms of type 2 diabetes are subtle and can go undiagnosed for many years until it's too late to avoid serious complications such as heart attack and vision problems.
- In Maryland, it's estimated that 143,000 people have diabetes and don't know it.
- A Maryland Diabetes Prevention and Control Program provider survey confirmed the need for continued awareness activities.

Program

- The Maryland Diabetes Prevention and Control Program promoted American Diabetes Alert Day to raise awareness among Maryland residents about risk factors for diabetes and to empower individuals to assess their risk of developing diabetes.
- The Program provided posters and a risk test to partners in every local health department to insure coverage across the state. Health department partners were asked to display the materials and to track responses to questions they asked of participants about their awareness of the risk factors for diabetes before taking the test and the actions they would take in response to their risk assessment. People scoring ten points or more on the risk test are considered to be at a high risk for type 2 diabetes and are encouraged to see a health care professional for further evaluation.
- The Program also provided funds to the local chapter of the American Diabetes Association to augment the awareness campaign with an American Diabetes Alert Day television station special event that included six, sixty-second cut-ins featuring brief interviews with health professionals speaking on topics specific to diabetes. A phone bank in the studio was staffed by health professionals who answered viewer questions about diabetes. A banner ad on the station Web site linked directly to the risk test on the American Diabetes Association Web site.

Impact

The results of this awareness activity include:

- Awareness materials were available in every jurisdiction across the state of Maryland
- Of those taking the risk test, all reported an increase in knowledge about diabetes risk factors and an intention to take action
- About one hundred callers were referred to an appropriate resource for help with their question or concern and received useful diabetes education publications.

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