

Galvanizing Community Engagement Through Community Coalition to Promote the National Diabetes Prevention Program in Alaska

A 1705 NACDD Success Story



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHRONIC DISEASE DIRECTORS**

Promoting Health. Preventing Disease.



SUMMARY: NACDD is one of 10 organizations awarded a five-year cooperative agreement from CDC (DP17-1705) to scale the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) in underserved areas. NACDD supported the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to increase access to the National DPP lifestyle change program in underserved areas in Alaska by offering and promoting a telephonic lifestyle change program in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. A key aspect of reaching this goal was to engage a diverse group of community partners to help implement strategies to raise awareness of prediabetes and enrollment, increase provider screening, testing, and referral, and to pursue benefit coverage. NACDD's partnership with a community coalition called the Kenai Prevention Network proved to be the key to successful community engagement and galvanizing the community around diabetes prevention and the project.

CHALLENGE: The challenge was how to identify, reach, and engage potential community partners to help launch and promote a new telephonic National DPP lifestyle change program in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. Specifically, NACDD and partners wanted to raise awareness of prediabetes and enrollment, increase provider screening, testing, and referral, and pursue benefit coverage. To accomplish these goals, it was essential to cultivate key partnerships and champions with diverse roles and backgrounds within the community, such as healthcare organizations, large employers, public health, community-based organizations, and health insurers and payers.

SOLUTION: Through our network of public health partners, we learned about a community coalition called the Kenai Prevention Network, whose membership included Central Peninsula Hospital, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, Alaska Public Health Nursing, a federally qualified health center, an internal medicine provider group, the city of Soldotna (the largest community in the Kenai Peninsula), and others. Given the diverse membership, NACDD and partners seized the opportunity to work with the network. Likewise, the network was eager to partner with the project because their mission "...to implement positive lifestyle change opportunities to the communities of the Kenai Peninsula" closely aligned with our goals within the National DPP.

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"We've been playing a role of support organization because it matches our mission to improve the health of our community," he said. "We think this is a really good program." He also said that he envisions a holistic approach to community health that engages a number of partners, including city and borough employees, the school district, and the hospital.

RESULTS: The Kenai Prevention Network helped organize and facilitate two, face-to-face community engagement meetings in the first year, which helped to generate interest and enthusiasm in the project. The first meeting described the landscape of prediabetes and diabetes in Alaska and introduced the telephonic provider to network members. An exciting outcome of that meeting was that Peninsula Internal Medicine began referring patients with prediabetes to the telephonic provider. For the second



meeting, the Kenai Prevention Network partnered with NACDD to draw media attention to the project. As a result, additional community organizations participated and several stories ran in local print, radio, and online media channels. During the meeting, NACDD described the state and national context for the project, and community members created a list of suggestions and activities on how to reach project goals, including what they could do within their organizations. One of the most notable outcomes of that meeting was that two attendees decided to become a mentor (aka lifestyle coach) for the telephonic program. Both meetings helped to galvanize the community around the project. It was important to show community partners how local efforts fit into the greater context of the National DPP to achieve such a high level of community engagement.

PARTNER INVOLVEMENT IS KEY: The Alaska DHSS partnered with the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service to promote the National Diabetes Prevention and Program and to recruit mentors and participants for the telephonic lifestyle change program in the Kenai Peninsula. For more information about how to become a mentor or a participant, contact Leslie Shallcross at (907) 474 2426, lashallcross@alaska.edu. Providers who are interested in referring their patients to the lifestyle change program should contact the Alaska Diabetes Prevention and Control Program at (907) 269 8035, diabetes@alaska.gov.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS: To maintain momentum and to build upon the success of our Community engagement work through the Kenai Prevention Network, NACDD plans to follow up with each of the community partners on the suggestions and activities that they proposed. NACDD will work to establish a formal agreement with Peninsula Internal Medicine to continue screening, testing, and referral into the telephonic program, and approach other providers and healthcare organizations to do the same. In the project's second year, NACDD will develop an outreach and marketing plan with network members to recruit more participants for the telephonic program, with a concerted effort to reach priority populations. Because several network members include organizations that are self insured, such as the city of Soldotna, the school district, and the hospital, NACDD will work with them, specifically, to pursue coverage for the National DPP lifestyle change program for their employees.