Diabetes program in North Idaho with proven results

The Situation
Everyday in the United States there are 3600 people diagnosed with diabetes, 50 people go blind, 120 start kidney dialysis, 240 have limb amputations, and there are countless cardiovascular events and procedures—all caused by diabetes. The annual cost of diabetes in Idaho is estimated at $658 million. Preventing life-threatening complications of diabetes requires controlling blood sugar and blood pressure and controlling blood lipids. Self-management training, including nutrition and physical activity education, helps patients control their diabetes and prevents hospitalizations, cutting health care costs by up to $8.76 for every $1 invested.

Many people with type 2 diabetes can control their blood glucose by following a healthy meal plan and exercise program. Studies have shown that people with pre-diabetes who lose weight and increase their physical activity can prevent or delay diabetes and even return their blood glucose levels to normal.

Diabetes education is an integral component of treating type 2 diabetes and preventing or delaying the onset of type 2 diabetes in the pre-diabetic.

Our Response
The Healthy Eating with Diabetes workshop taught in the Panhandle of Idaho was designed to help people make long changes in their eating habits, physical activity habits, and in their attitudes about food, weight, and themselves.

The Healthy Eating with Diabetes workshop is a 12-hour workshop that includes such topics as using the Idaho Plate Method to determine food choices, serving sizes, carbohydrate counting, reading food labels, glycemic index, reducing your heart disease risk, a 3-hour grocery store tour, pedometer walking, what to expect when visiting your physician, foot exams and foot health, and resources in the community for treating diabetes. All of these topics are geared toward inspiring people to make long-term behavior changes in their diets and physical fitness levels.

In 2007, Healthy Eating with Diabetes partnered with several senior centers in North Idaho and was offered free of charge to participants, thanks to funding made available through Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho.

HEWD was offered at 5 locations in 2007 to 104 participants.

Program Outcomes
Evaluation data collected from participants of HEWD demonstrate its impact.

1. I understand the role of insulin in the body.
   Pre: 42%  Post: 91%

2. I understand what causes type 2 diabetes.
   Pre: 50%  Post: 96%

3. I am aware of the complications associated with diabetes.
   Pre: 58%  Post: 100%

4. When seeing my physician, I understand what should happen during my visit.
   Pre: 46%  Post: 96%

5. I understand the hemoglobin A1C test and understand it’s importance in my diabetes management.
   Pre: 38%  Post: 75%

6. I understand how to use the plate method to manage my blood sugars.
   Pre: 17%  Post: 96%
7. I understand the importance of choosing fiber rich foods.
   Pre: 38%  Post: 100%
8. I am aware of nutrition practices affecting my lipid profile.
   Pre: 21%  Post: 88%
9. I am confident about the foods I buy at the grocery store.
   Pre: 38%  Post: 92%

Additionally, participants reported as a result of HEWD:

- 92% will track their physician visits and lab tests using the health record card.
- 100% have increased their vegetable and fruit consumption.
- 100% are eating more fiber rich foods.
- 75% are eating lower glycemic index foods.
- 96% are eating healthier fats like monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.
- 75% are more physically active.
- 92% are following the plate method for most of my meals.

HEWD will work to secure funding from Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho to support this workshop in 2008. HEWD will also continue its partnerships with Panhandle Health, Idaho’s Diabetes Control and Prevention Program, and North Idaho senior centers.