



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
Room 108 Finance Building, 613 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-787-4397

Released: February 11, 2016

Summary of the Staff Study in Response to House Resolution 936 of 2014

Diabetes in Pennsylvania: Public Health and Insurance Responses

This is the second of a series of reports by the Joint State Government Commission (Commission) written in response to 2014 House Resolution 936. HR936 provides for an ongoing study of the public health problem posed by diabetes in Pennsylvania, and directs the Commission to describe, evaluate, and make recommendations for improving the Commonwealth's response. The broad purposes of public health programs directed against diabetes are "to reduce the incidence of diabetes, improve diabetes care, and control complications associated with diabetes."¹

The report first presents a somewhat extensive description of diabetes and prediabetes, including the different types, symptoms and complications, and risk factors along with lifestyle changes and medical interventions that are used to help patients manage these conditions.

The next chapter moves from individual cases to demographic and economic effects. Among other things, this chapter emphasizes the mortality and morbidity effects on the residents of Pennsylvania. Diabetes is not only the seventh leading cause of death, it also makes those who are afflicted with it more susceptible to other leading killers, especially heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure. Data from PHC4 quantify the burden the disease places on patients and the Commonwealth's hospitals.

The third chapter lists the programs administered by Commonwealth departments and agencies that address diabetes. As the lead agency on public health issues, PADOH administers most of these programs within its Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (DPCP), which includes the Diabetes

Prevention Program (DPP) and Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME). PADOH also administers the Juvenile Diabetes Cure Research Tax Check-Off Program that funds medical research on Type 1 diabetes. To maximize the impact of its programs, PADOH works through healthcare providers rather than with individual patients. As the resolution directs, this report provides an assessment of the PADOH's response to diabetes in terms of financial impact, benefit assessment and funding, agency coordination, recommendations, and budgetary requirements. Programs administered by the Departments of Aging, Conservation and Natural Resources, Education, and Human Services also play vital roles in assisting Pennsylvania residents with diabetes.

The fourth chapter deals with insurance coverage of diabetes for active and retired Commonwealth employees. This coverage is provided by private health insurers through contracts with the Pennsylvania Employee Benefits Trust Fund (PEBTF). The chapter describes PEBTF and diabetes coverage under the contractee insurance providers.

The fifth and final chapter is a list of recommendations addressed to the General Assembly and the Commonwealth agencies, respectively. These include suggestions regarding mandatory coverage of prevention programs for persons with prediabetes, the establishment of an advisory committee for diabetes or for chronic conditions including diabetes, an emphasis on screening for prediabetes and undiagnosed diabetes, and interventions to encourage Pennsylvanians to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The full report is available on our website, <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>

¹ HR 936, page 2, lines 6-8.