

## Hawai'i Health Partners News

December 2014

### The high cost of diabetes

The physical and emotional costs of diabetes on patients and families are obvious, but the financial costs of diabetes are also a concern. Did you know that diabetes accounts for more than \$1 of every \$5 spent on medical care nationwide<sup>1</sup>? According to a 2012 study by the American Diabetes Association, there are 22.3 million people living with diabetes in the United States. These patients incurred a staggering \$306 billion in direct medical costs.

Diabetes-related costs are even more alarming for seniors – 59 percent of health care expenditures attributed to diabetes are for patients ages 65 and older.

Even more so, consider the millions of undiagnosed patients with diabetes and pre-diabetes, and the impact of this disease, or what could even be considered an epidemic, is quickly realized.

Hawai'i Health Partners (HHP) is committed to supporting our member physicians and patients with tools and resources to successfully manage diabetes. Patient education is a mainstay in effective diabetes care. We have ADA-trained educators available through Straub Clinic & Hospital at the King Street and Pearlridge locations, and on Kaua'i through Kaua'i Medical Clinic.

We also have PCP-directed, personal health coaching services, and a diabetes care team that has begun the



work of identifying and promoting best practices and diabetes care standards, and developing additional programs to help achieve them.

An HHP representative can assist in connecting you with these resources. Please contact HHP Medical Director Dale Glenn at [dale.glenn@hawaiihealthpartners.org](mailto:dale.glenn@hawaiihealthpartners.org) for more information.

<sup>1</sup>ADA Report: The Economic Costs of Diabetes: Is It Time for a New Treatment Paradigm?

### HHP welcomes new members

Hawai'i Health Partners would like to officially welcome the following individuals who were recently appointed as new members to the organization:

- Alan Y. Ahana, MD
- David A. Becerril, MD
- Gary T. Blum, MD
- Kelley A. Chinen Okimoto, MD
- Michael K. Chun, DPM
- Constante J. Flora, MD
- EmmaKate B. Friedlander, MD
- Christopher T. Huang, MD
- Diana Y. Huang, MD
- Byron H. Izuka, MD
- Jasmin S. Jensen, MD
- Robin H. Lynch, MD
- Carlos E. Moreno-Cabral, MD
- Alan N. Oki, MD
- Josephine P. Quensell, MD
- Erik L. Russell, MD
- Lynne Y. Saito-Tom, MD
- Tracee Y. Suetsugu, MD
- Sherri K. Taylor, MD
- Nina M. Teruya, MD
- Greg Y. Uramoto, MD
- Lori L. Yamanaka, MD

## Friendly reminder: The importance of managing elevated blood sugar

*Even mildly elevated glucose can have a disproportionate effect on outcomes, and not just with diabetic patients*

Early detection and aggressive management is the best way to prevent complications. However, it's well known that the slow progression of diabetes allows it to go either undetected or ignored until enough damage occurs to cause real, unavoidable symptoms. Once long-term complications develop—nephropathy, neuropathy, retinopathy or infection—it may be too late to regain lost function, but not too late to prevent further damage.

Good management of blood sugar is essential to avoiding both short-term and long-term complications of diabetes. Most of this effort takes place in the ambulatory clinic setting, but sometimes physician intervention isn't enough to help patients adopt good behaviors in managing their diabetes. Techniques and recommendations for helping out in these situations include:

- Motivational interviewing and health coaching
- Lifestyle management
- Hands-on instruction and early use of medication, such as insulin.

HHP has staff and resources available to assist physician members with instituting these recommendations.

To help with elevated glucose in the inpatient setting, Hawai'i Pacific Health is currently rolling out a software program named Glucommander. Glucommander is a decision support system that works with our EHR to track and help manage elevated sugars in the hospital setting, reducing complications for patients.

With a coordinated effort to control high blood sugar in all settings, patients and families will have a better chance at a happy and healthy future.

