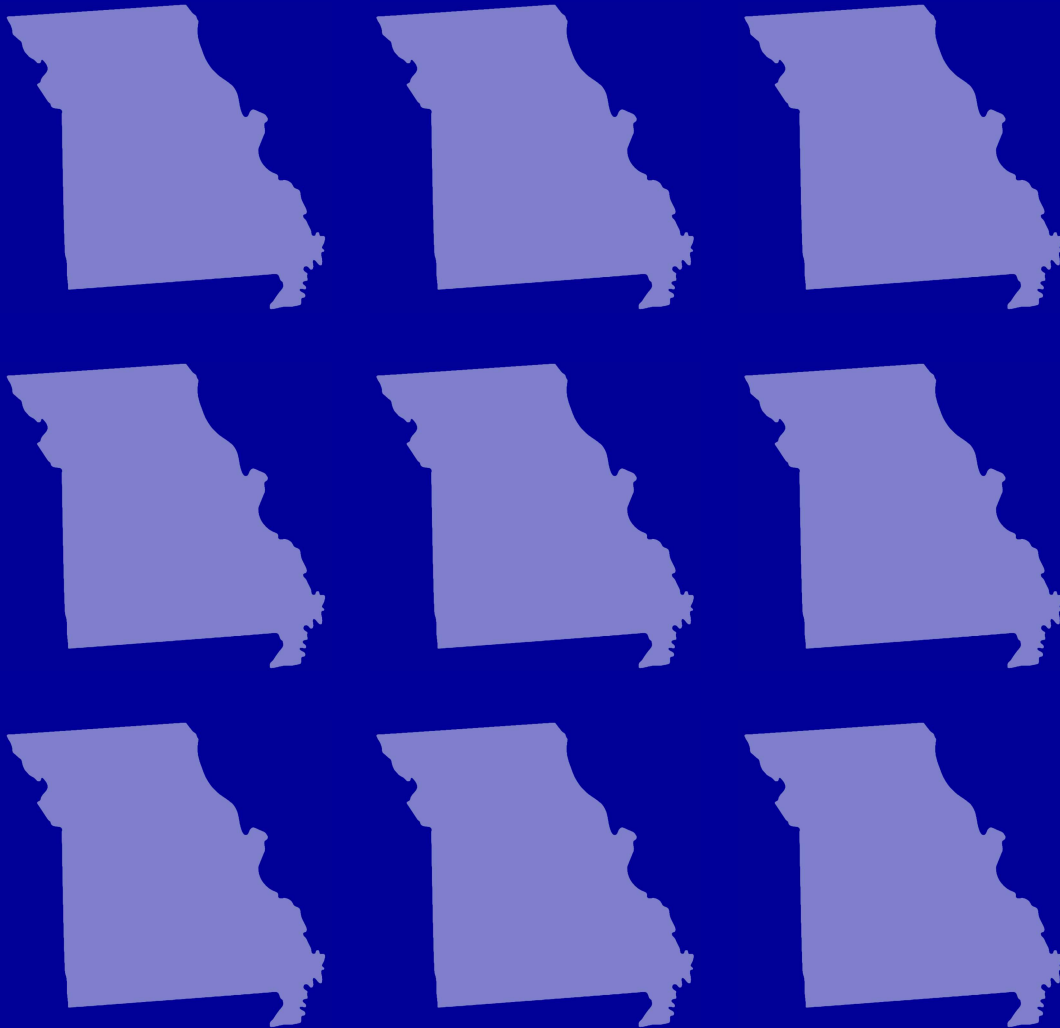


Preventing and Managing Diabetes in the State of Missouri



A Roadmap for National Diabetes Prevention Programs

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Introduction

Diabetes is a significant public health challenge in the U.S., affecting millions of lives and imposing a substantial burden on health care systems, employers and payers. This document outlines the importance of effective statewide diabetes prevention and management strategies, focusing on the role of the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) and the innovative solutions HabitNu provided to address the state's unique challenges.

The Diabetes Epidemic: Prevalence and Challenges

Diabetes is a prevalent and pressing public health issue. In the United States, over 38 million people have diabetes and approximately 84 million adults live with prediabetes, a serious condition where blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not high enough to qualify as diabetes.¹ Prediabetes affects over one-third of adults under 65 and half of those over 65. Alarming, more than 80% of people with prediabetes are unaware they have it, as it often presents without symptoms.²

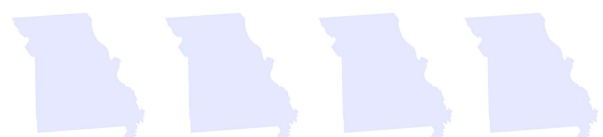
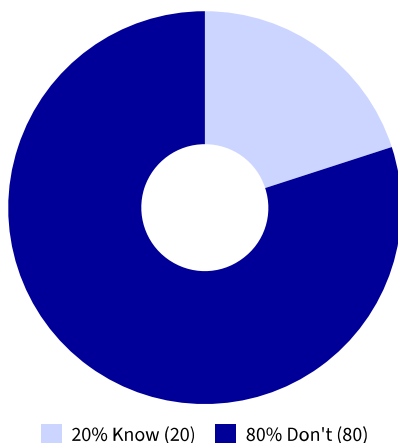
The Problem: Inadequate Attention Until It's Too Late

While diabetes is both common and debilitating, it often receives insufficient attention from health care providers until it evolves into a significant medical emergency. Although providers may emphasize the importance of diet and exercise, they typically lack the time, resources, and financial incentives to implement comprehensive prevention or management programs. Consequently, diabetes often goes unaddressed or poorly managed in its early stages, progressing silently until severe complications, such as coronary artery bypass surgery, arise. This highlights the critical importance of early detection and proactive care.

A National Initiative: The CDC and NDPP

In response to the growing diabetes burden, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) in 2010 to reduce the progression of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes nationwide. To support this effort, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (MO DHSS) has built a statewide diabetes prevention network, linking Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs), health care systems, community pharmacies, and community-based organizations to expand access to NDPP services and ensure a unified approach to prevention and care. Despite advances in health care, we have seen many successes, but challenges continue to persist.

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Challenges in Implementing and Sustaining the Program

Few understand these complexities better than Joyce Hoth, Missouri's Diabetes and Heart Disease Program Manager. A longtime advocate for diabetes prevention, Hoth has firsthand experience navigating the obstacles inherent in managing and preventing this widespread condition. Several years ago, she helped develop a robust NDPP at the Gateway Region YMCA in St. Louis. "The program grew from serving one cohort of participants to multiple cohorts across about 25 different YMCA locations across the region and eventually became the largest in the state. I gained valuable experience in delivering the program as a lifestyle coach and serving as the program coordinator across multiple locations," Hoth said.

In 2019, Hoth transitioned to the role of Diabetes Program Specialist and in 2024 became the Public Health Program Supervisor of the Diabetes and Heart Disease Program for the MO DHSS. In her role, she provides technical assistance to organizations establishing and sustaining NDPPs, helping them navigate complex requirements and grow their programs.

The Missouri Diabetes Program is working to "support organizations that are either just starting or already recognized as NDPP suppliers but still need additional assistance. We provide technical assistance, supporting them through the process to build their programs and then to grow and sustain their programs and increase enrollment," Hoth noted.

Because of her extensive experience developing and administering a NDPP, Hoth has a deep understanding of the practical challenges faced by aspiring suppliers. "There's a lot of research and evidence behind the program, but there are also stringent requirements for becoming and remaining a CDC-recognized supplier," Hoth noted.

Building and sustaining a successful National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) requires suppliers to manage a complex array of tasks, including:

- Building program awareness among providers such as primary care physicians, specialists, etc.
- Recruiting referral partners to ensure a steady flow of participants
- Managing contracts with referral partners and payers
- Managing NDPP enrollment, coaching, data and CDC compliance
- Training coaches and equipping them with the necessary tools
- Providing ongoing support for coaches to maintain program quality
- Educating and supporting participants throughout their journey
- Collecting and managing data to monitor program performance
- Quantifying and verifying outcomes to demonstrate effectiveness
- Collaborating with insurers to secure reimbursement for services
- Submitting claims efficiently and ensuring timely reimbursement
- Ensuring ongoing compliance with CDC and payer guidelines

Each of these components is vital to delivering a successful, lasting program that maximizes its impact on diabetes prevention.

HabitNu: Empowering Missouri's NDPP Suppliers

To address the challenges faced by suppliers, the MO DHSS partnered with HabitNu in 2021 to create and oversee a statewide supplier network. Supported by CDC funding and state and local initiatives, this effort aimed to expand access to the NDPP and Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) services by adding new providers and strengthening the capacity of existing ones, with the goal of increasing the reach and effectiveness of these services in preventing and managing diabetes across Missouri.

With her experience delivering NDPP, Hoth saw HabitNu as a key partner in expanding these services statewide. "Having firsthand knowledge of the program, I recognized the critical role HabitNu could play in scaling these services," she said. "Their experience in managing large-scale, community-based programs made them an ideal partner for the state's expansion efforts."

HabitNu has played a pivotal role in Missouri, managing and strengthening referral partnerships to improve diabetes prevention efforts. The company collaborated with key stakeholders, including Missouri's 1817 Alliance, the Bright Spot Initiative, FQHCs, Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) organizations, the Missouri Hospital Association, and the Missouri Primary Care Association. This collaborative approach has streamlined the referral process, providing organizations with a centralized portal where prospective participants can easily browse and enroll in available classes.

HabitNu also helps NDPP and DSMES program suppliers by providing tools that simplify program delivery and improve participant outcomes. The HabitNu platform streamlines tasks like class creation, participant onboarding, program delivery, billing, data collection, and CDC-compliant reporting. The participant app tracks food, weight, activity, medications, and blood sugar, offering personalized feedback, reminders, and educational resources. Coaches can use real-time dashboards to track participant progress, perform trend analysis, manage billing, and generate reports efficiently. These integrated tools enhance program management and lead to better engagement and health outcomes.

The success of Missouri's NDPP network has led other states to adopt the HabitNu platform and Umbrella Hub³ for their own health initiatives, demonstrating its effectiveness and scalability in supporting statewide programs.

Impact on the Missouri Network

With HabitNu's support, Missouri's NDPP network has achieved remarkable progress in the past three years, including:

- Expansion to 15 active program suppliers
- Enrollment of 1,925 participants
- Submission of claims for 740 participants, representing 38% of total enrollees
- Establishment of agreements with seven insurers, covering Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, and commercial plans

These milestones highlight the network's growth and success, underscoring its vital role in expanding access to diabetes prevention services across the state.



MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH &
SENIOR SERVICES**

Success Stories from the Field:

Wellness 4 Prevention and Your Diabetes Partners

Carolyn Skelton of Wellness 4 Prevention highlights HabitNu's role in increasing access to diabetes prevention services. To reach more individuals and reduce diabetes incidence, Wellness 4 Prevention offers NDPP programs through community organizations, such as parks and recreation facilities. However, marketing the program and building a referral network through physician practices has presented challenges.



**WELLNESS
4 PREVENTION**

"Many physicians are unaware of what a NDPP is, making it difficult to build awareness," Skelton explained. "HabitNu assists with media campaigns, webinars, and public relations efforts to raise awareness about NDPP. The platform streamlines managing schedules, recording classes, and engaging participants. Most importantly, it simplifies tracking and reporting data to the CDC." Skelton highlighted how HabitNu's data tools support personalized participant engagement: "I can review my data reports to identify participants who might need encouragement or a quick check-in. That ability to offer timely support is invaluable."



Susan Berberich, founder of Your Diabetes Partners, has successfully utilized HabitNu to develop and manage an outpatient diabetes education and prevention program. Berberich has found that HabitNu helps address a key challenge: gaining physician buy-in for prevention programs. "It's difficult to convince providers of the value of prevention programs," Berberich explained. "Many physicians believe their patients are passive and only want a quick fix, like a pill. This mindset is common, so securing physician support is crucial for the program's success."

HabitNu's tools and resources have helped Berberich bridge this gap, making it easier to demonstrate the effectiveness of prevention programs to health care providers. "The data we collect helps us show physicians that our program can prevent or even reverse diabetes for participants who commit to the year-long process. It's a proven success," she added.

The HabitNu app has been important in driving participant engagement. "Everyone is phone app-driven these days, so having a patient-facing app is a major advantage. Participants appreciate having all the materials, including curriculum handouts, right on their phones. People are used to managing everything on their phones, from Netflix to communication, so we can connect with them directly through the HabitNu app. It's all at their fingertips," Berberich said.

Overcoming Reimbursement Challenges

While professionals like Hoth, Skelton, and Berberich are driven by their dedication to combating diabetes, the sustainability of diabetes prevention and management programs depends on suppliers receiving payment for the essential services they provide. However, securing reimbursement is no simple task. Suppliers must navigate a complex process to meet requirements and bill for NDPP services, often encountering delays and administrative hurdles.

HabitNu eliminates these hurdles by offering a reliable and streamlined NDPP framework through its “Umbrella Hub” structure. This model enables suppliers who lack CDC recognition to immediately deliver programs to Medicare and Medicaid members and bill for services under HabitNu’s Medicare and Medicaid supplier credentials. Once suppliers achieve CDC recognition and complete the necessary steps to become Medicare or Medicaid suppliers, they can transition to billing directly, graduating from the HabitNu Umbrella.

The HabitNu billing module has become essential for organizations administering NDPP, many of which lack experience with payer claims. “Suppliers need a way to generate revenue, especially when starting out,” said Hoth. “These organizations often struggle with the complexities of billing various payers, each with unique rules. Most NDPP suppliers are small, with coaches juggling program delivery and billing without the software or expertise to handle claims effectively.” She added, “The biggest challenge is sustaining these programs through reimbursement. HabitNu provides NDPP suppliers with the tools needed to submit claims and secure reimbursement from payers, addressing this critical barrier.”

Billing for NDPP services presents unique challenges due to its milestone-based, outcome-driven structure.



Payments depend on completing specific sessions (e.g., the first, fourth, and ninth) and achieving health goals, such as 5% weight loss by the fourth session or 9% by the ninth. While this model promotes participant engagement and health outcomes, it requires suppliers to track progress, adhere to payer-specific rules, and manage claims – challenges that can overwhelm smaller organizations.

The HabitNu billing module simplifies this process by managing milestone-based claims, ensuring compliance with payer requirements, and streamlining reimbursement. This allows suppliers to focus on delivering impactful programs and achieving meaningful results.

“This isn’t your typical fee-for-service billing and many common EMRs and billing systems cannot accommodate it,” said Vernon Mathias, Chief Growth Officer at HabitNu. “IT departments within health systems are often reluctant to create custom applications to handle this unique billing process.”

Simplifying the Billing Process for NDPP Providers

The billing module simplifies claims submission for NDPP suppliers by seamlessly automating milestone-based claims and ensuring compliance with payer requirements. Its claims scrubber enhances accuracy and reduces administrative tasks. The module supports multiple reimbursement pathways for the same CPT service code, tailored to each payer's specific fee structure. Whether programs are delivered in-person, via distance learning, or asynchronously, the module ensures adherence to billing rules for each modality, reducing complexity and allowing suppliers to focus on delivering effective programs and improving participant outcomes.

Supporting NDPP Suppliers in Missouri

HabitNu's ongoing webinars on NDPP billing have been invaluable for suppliers in Missouri. Reimbursement has long been a challenge, but with training and ongoing support from Billing Manager Andrea Brooks and her team, Missouri-based NDPP suppliers have gained the expertise and the confidence to navigate reimbursement complexities.

As a result, many organizations that once relied on grant funding are now successfully billing payers, positioning them for sustainable, long-term operations.

Brooks highlights the company's commitment to helping NDPP organizations streamline their billing operations. "We empower organizations with the tools and knowledge to submit accurate claims and secure timely reimbursements," says Brooks. "Our tailored support helps organizations navigate complex payer requirements, stay updated on insurance policy changes, manage credentialing with Medicare, Medicare Advantage, and Medicaid MCOs, and provides ongoing training. By simplifying billing and ensuring CDC compliance, we enable organizations to focus on delivering meaningful diabetes prevention programs."



Looking Ahead

Missouri's partnership with HabitNu is evolving its NDPP network into a sustainable, scalable model for diabetes prevention. By addressing key operational, technological, and financial challenges, HabitNu enables Missouri suppliers to focus on their primary goal: improving health outcomes for Missourians.

This collaboration strengthens the state's capacity to deliver effective prevention programs and ensures long-term financial viability. "Our goal has been to create a self-sustaining statewide network that enables NDPP suppliers to consistently enroll participants, deliver programs efficiently, and secure timely reimbursement for their services," says Hoth. "While we've made significant progress, continuing to strengthen and sustain this network is a top priority."



habitnu.com

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