

# KEYSTONE FIRST: A MEDICAID HEALTH PLAN INITIATIVE

## Empowering People With Type 2 Diabetes to Lose Weight<sup>1</sup>

### Description:

Keystone First, one of Pennsylvania's largest Medicaid managed care health plans, launched a 12-week Lose to Win health education and awareness program for adult members with type 2 diabetes and obesity. The health plan decided to focus on Medicaid members whose diabetes was out of control (with A1C levels above 9). The members selected were more than 30 pounds overweight and indicated they were ready to make the lifestyle changes needed to improve their health.

The goals of the program were to teach healthy habits and strategies to help manage diabetes, increase physical activity, lower cholesterol levels and body mass index (BMI), and reduce emergency room use and hospital admissions.



### Interventions:

During a kickoff event with their families and other members designed to build both enthusiasm for the program and camaraderie, initial measures of participants' weight, blood sugar levels, cholesterol, and BMI were taken. Afterward, each person received a call from a nurse case manager to discuss managing diabetes and developing a care plan. The program offered one-on-one support in following that plan and included:

- Case manager collaboration with each member's primary care doctor to design a personalized care plan
- Weekly calls to check on the member's progress, ask about program meeting attendance, and offer encouragement to attend future meetings if any were missed
- Help in arranging transportation and/or child care to facilitate members' ability to attend meetings
- Encouragement to visit a local gym 3 times a week to work with a personal trainer to develop and follow a customized fitness regimen
- Motivation to engage in fun exercise activities such as water aerobics, line dancing, and Zumba®
- Opportunities to take advantage of "special activities" such as supermarket tours and cooking demonstrations, which were voluntary but strongly encouraged
- Ongoing monitoring of participants' blood sugar levels throughout the program, with lab reports sent to their primary care doctors

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## Results:

Among the 115 people who completed the program in 2010, Keystone First found that their knowledge about nutrition and healthy food had increased, and most members reported an increase in regular exercise and an overall commitment to a healthier lifestyle. In addition:

- The average weight loss in the group was 10-15 pounds
- BMI levels improved by an average of 3.78%
- HDL cholesterol levels rose by an average of 5.5%
- The total cost of diabetes care fell by 12.1%

**Reference: 1.** America's Health Insurance Plans. Innovations in Medicaid Managed Care-Highlights of Health Plans' Programs to Improve the Health and Well-Being of Medicaid Beneficiaries. [http://www.lacare.org/sites/default/files/innovations\\_in\\_medicaid\\_managed\\_care\\_publication3.pdf](http://www.lacare.org/sites/default/files/innovations_in_medicaid_managed_care_publication3.pdf). Accessed October 10, 2017.