Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes is a five-class series covering basic nutrition and self-care management topics. The program helps people with diabetes learn the skills needed to manage their disease successfully.

Relevance
The number of Americans with diabetes is 29.1 million, or 9.3% of the population. An estimated 86 million Americans have pre-diabetes. The incidence is projected to increase 43% by 2020. Health-care costs now average $13,700 per person with diabetes, for an annual total cost of $254 billion in the U.S. – $176 billion (72%) for health care and $69 billion (28%) in lost productivity. Men with diabetes miss an average of 11 work days each year; women miss about 9 work days. Almost $1 of every $5 spent on health care is for people with diabetes. Poor diabetes management leads to increased health-care costs. People with diabetes who maintain their blood glucose, blood pressure, and cholesterol numbers within recommended ranges can keep their costs, health risks, quality of life, and productivity very close to those without the disease. Currently, however, only 7% of people with diabetes are at the recommended levels.

Diabetes is not curable, but it is manageable. While the skills needed to effectively manage diabetes are well documented, diabetes education is not readily available. The burdens of diabetes mismanagement are disproportionately borne by those with little or no insurance coverage, lower literacy, poor or no English skills, lower educational and income levels, and poor access to transportation.

The annual cost of diabetes in Texas in 2010 is estimated at $28.8 billion. An estimated 1.8 million, or 9.7%, of Texans 18 years old or older are diagnosed with diabetes; another 440,468 have diabetes but do not know it. Seventy-two percent of Texas seniors have either diabetes or pre-diabetes. Texas is projected to have a greater incidence rate and increased costs in the future due to the growing population of Hispanics/Latinos, who are at a greater risk for the disease.

Response
Extension health professionals developed Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes, a low-cost class series delivered in five sessions. The program was pilot tested in 2002 in 12 counties. Class materials include a curriculum consistent with the American Diabetes Association Standards of Care along with PowerPoint® presentations with presenter notes and activities, suggested practice activities each week, and an evaluation program. County agents are trained to organize local health professionals to help plan, market, and provide the class series. The program’s primary goal is to improve blood glucose management.
Results

- In 2014, 624 people with diabetes registered for classes; 412 (66%) completed the five-week series and the Wrap-Up or post-test. 419 people had never had classes before. The classes were provided in 40 counties.

- The average age of participants was 62 years. 55 (9%) were African American; 186 (30%) were Hispanic/Latino; 7 (1%) were Native American; 2 (<1%) were Asian; 353 (57%) were Caucasian; and 21 classified themselves as “other” (3%).

- At the beginning of classes, the average blood glucose before meals reported by participants was 143 mg/dL, decreasing to 132 mg/dL at 5 weeks. A1c decreased from 8.7% in class 1 to 7.5% in class 5.

- Knowledge, practices, and feeling in control improved.

- 97% of the participants (397 reporting) attending the last class rated the series as excellent or good.

Economic Impact

The potential health-care cost savings resulting from improved management of diabetes by the 2014 participants is an estimated $40 million for their remaining years of life.

Success Stories

- “…I lost 11 pounds since these classes started. Also, my glucose readings are now reading…90-110…I would recommend this class to anyone.”

- A newly diagnosed man reported he felt that “…because of what he learned, he and his wife felt more capable of taking care of himself…”

- “Since attending these classes, my insulin dosage before each meal has been reduced from 38 units to 35 units.”

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Texas Counties Participating in Do Well, Be Well with Diabetes in 2014.