

Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program (MDPP) Referrals

Insights from Health Care Provider Referral Champions

In June 2024, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) conducted interviews with 4 Primary Care and Specialty Providers who refer their eligible patients to the MDPP, a covered Medicare benefit to help prevent or delay type 2 diabetes. The interviews aimed to better understand health care provider referral practices, motivations, challenges, and suggestions to increase referrals to the MDPP. These comments are from the health care providers' perspective.

Motivations for Referring to the MDPP



“[Patients] have nothing to lose by signing up for the program - only something to gain.”

- ▶ Providers **appreciate support** in improving the health of patients. The MDPP can help reduce their patients' risk of type 2 diabetes and **improve other health outcomes** and quality of life.
- ▶ Patients who enrolled in the MDPP shared **consistent positive feedback** and expressed **appreciation** for their providers who prioritized their health through referrals.

“My patients find [MDPP referrals] meaningful and it is a great a way to **build community** and address social isolation.”

- ▶ Concerns about out-of-pocket costs may deter patients from enrolling in the program – emphasizing **the MDPP is fully covered by Medicare** can motivate providers to refer Medicare beneficiaries.

Methods for Streamlining Referrals



- ▶ **Automating referral processes** within electronic health records can reduce burden on providers who have limited time with patients.
- ▶ **Lab results** that identify patients as having prediabetes **often come in after the appointment** – having an approved, **scripted message** or brochure can help streamline patient communications.
- ▶ **Regularly educating providers** and their clinical care teams (1-2 times per year) at internal meetings on the benefit of MDPP and referral process can help to increase referrals.

“Current treatment [prioritizes] management of diabetes, not prediabetes. We need to **develop a culture change in how we care for prediabetes.**”

- ▶ Trusted **partnerships** with diabetes staff can help providers ensure warm handoffs after initial referrals.

Provider Tips for Increasing Referrals



- ▶ Additional **clinical guidelines** for treating prediabetes may help to increase referrals (see the [Quality Metrics](#) page of the Coverage Toolkit for more details).
- ▶ **Patient testimonials** (especially from someone local to the area) are powerful for encouraging providers to prioritize referrals.
- ▶ MDPP supplier organizations with strong technical infrastructure for referrals and **system level technical support** are better positioned to increase referrals.
- ▶ MDPP suppliers should be cautious about communication overload to providers and their patients. Offering feedback or education **less frequently** (1-2 times annually) may be most effective.

“The key [to increasing MDPP referrals] is to influence the doctors, influence the patients, and **make it [the referral process] easy!**”

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Visit the National DPP Coverage Toolkit [MDPP Implementation Resources](#) page for more information.