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In each issue of *Diabetes Resources* we provide information about management of diabetes for health care providers.

Our publications support the *New Mexico Diabetes Practice Guideline* by providing specific tools and resources for providers to help reduce the complications associated with diabetes. The **ABCs of diabetes** is a reminder to test patients 2 to 4 times per year for **A1C**, check **Blood pressure** at each visit and test **Cholesterol** levels annually. The *Diabetes Resources* address other clinical recommendations. Dilated eye exam, foot exam and kidney disease screening as well as nutrition and physical activities are additional covered topics.

In support of the *New Mexico Diabetes Practice Guideline 2006*, please see the reverse side of *Diabetes Resources* for tools and resources that can help in your efforts to provide education and support to your patients with diabetes.

Check [www.nmtod.com](http://www.nmtod.com) for organizations that have graciously provided funding for *Diabetes Resources*.

*New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes* is a broad coalition of New Mexico's diabetes care professionals, New Mexico Health Plans, the New Mexico Department of Health, and the New Mexico Medical Review Association, with technical and administrative support from the American Diabetes Association.

# Diabetes Resources

## Practical Information for New Mexico Health Care Professionals



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## Lower the A1C to Reduce the Risk

### The Issue:

- ❖ The A1C remains the best way for clinicians to monitor the long-term blood glucose control of their patients with diabetes.
- ❖ For every point the A1C is lowered, (e.g., from 9.0% to 8.0%) the relative risk for microvascular complications is reduced by 35%, for diabetes-related death by 25%, and for heart attack by 14%.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ In New Mexico 25% of people with diabetes had not had an A1C test at all during 2003.<sup>2,3</sup> The recommended frequency is two to four times per year.
- ❖ Many people with diabetes still don't understand A1C. According to a recent study, only a quarter of people who have diabetes know their A1C level.<sup>1</sup>

### Did you know?

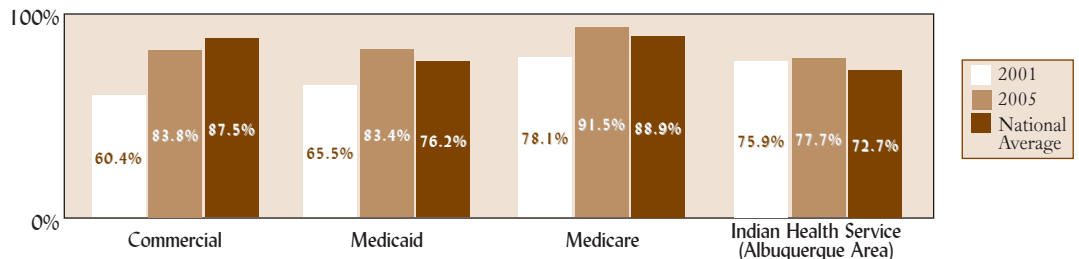
A1C (A-one-C) is now the preferred "short-hand" for referring to glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c). Using A1C avoids confusion with hematology tests (hemoglobin) and makes it easier for patients and clinicians to communicate.

### The Current Clinical Recommendation:

The *New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes Practice Guideline 2006* recommends that all people with diabetes have an A1C test 2-4 times per year. The goal is an A1C < 7%.

### New Mexico's Numbers:

*Percentage of People with Diabetes Who Received At Least One A1C Test in 2001 and 2005<sup>2,4,6</sup>*



Remember: A1C testing recommended 2 - 4 times a year

<sup>1</sup>Diabetes Care 2004, 27:S15-35.

<sup>2</sup>Refers to persons enrolled in one of the health plans participating in NMHCTOD, using data reported based on nationally validated HEDIS® methodology. HEDIS is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance. Rates derived from meeting continuous enrollment requirements.

<sup>3</sup>This number is calculated using HEDIS methodology and is the percentage of patients with diabetes who were not tested for A1C in the year 2005.

<sup>4</sup>HEDIS 2006 data for CY 2005 provided by BCBSNM/HMONM, Molina Healthcare of New Mexico, Lovelace Health System and Presbyterian Health Plan.

<sup>5</sup>Indian Health Service data were provided for the Albuquerque Area and based on Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators from 2005 fiscal year.

<sup>6</sup>National average data provided by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for CY 2005, Quality Compass for CY 2005 and Indian Health Services for FY 2005.

# Resources for Clinicians

The following resources are FREE and can be downloaded from the New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes website at [www.nmtod.com](http://www.nmtod.com). For further information contact Charm Lindblad, Executive Director, at **505.796.9121** or toll-free **1.866.796.9121**.



**How To Interpret A1C**—A1C is the most important indicator of glucose control in diabetes. But it can be difficult to understand the clinical relevance of a given A1C value. You know the goal is an A1C <7.0%, but do you know why? Did you know an A1C level of 9.0% is approximately equal to an average glucose level of 240 mg/dl? Do you know how to interpret the A1C when patients have repeated episodes of

hypoglycemia or when they are anemic? “How to Interpret A1C” will help answer those questions and will show you how A1C levels relate to average blood glucose levels and clinical correlations. An invaluable “memory jogger” for clinicians, it can be downloaded free from the New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes website.



**A1C Tool for Patients**—The New Mexico Department of Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Program has produced an excellent patient education brochure that explains A1C in simple terms. Written at a fifth grade reading level, it incorporates graphics to enhance patient understanding. A section called “Steps to Take” assists the patient and provider in documenting diabetes self-management goals related to

improving the patient's A1C. A color version can be laminated or put in a plastic sleeve for repeated use in one-on-one training with patients. A black-and-white version can be easily photocopied and given to patients to take home. Spanish translations are also available. There are no copyright restrictions. This form can be found on the New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes website.

**A1C Analyzers for Office or Home Use**—It is possible to perform A1C testing in your office. In-home A1C testing is also available, although its role in improving diabetes outcomes is unknown. The American Diabetes Association takes no position on in-home testing. If your patients use in-home testing, it may be valuable to encourage them to discuss the results with you. Here are two examples:

- Bayer Diagnostics manufactures the DCA 2000 + Analyzer for office use providing rapid results for both A1C and microalbumin/creatinine assays, taking six and seven minutes respectively. For information, go to [www.bayerdiag.com](http://www.bayerdiag.com) or call **1.800.445.5901**.
- Metrika, Inc., makes a single use analyzer for office or home use. A1C Now provides results in eight minutes. For information go to [www.A1CNow.com](http://www.A1CNow.com) or call **1.877.212.4968**.

*NMHCTOD does not endorse any particular manufacturer. Check with individual health plans for information on insurance coverage.*

**Websites**—The editorial committee has identified a select number of websites about A1C testing that we think you will find informative. To access these websites, please visit the New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes website.\*

*\*Please note that these websites do not necessarily represent the views of New Mexico Health Care Takes On Diabetes. They are listed for your reference and convenience. NMHCTOD does not evaluate websites for content accuracy or application to any clinical situation.*

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