



# How to Consider Social Determinants of Health in Your Program Decisions

When deciding how to offer the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program as a covered benefit, your organization will need to consider many factors. One of these factors is how social determinants of health (SDOH) may be affecting your workforce.

SDOH can affect your employees in many ways, including their ability to make healthy choices and prevent type 2 diabetes. As you make decisions about how to structure your program, you should intentionally consider the social and environmental factors that influence health outcomes. This approach will give your employees the best opportunities to make lifestyle changes to improve their health.



**Social determinants of health (SDOH)** are the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age and the wider set of forces and systems that shape the conditions of daily life.

SDOH have been shown to have more influence on health than either genetic factors or access to healthcare services. For example, poverty is highly correlated with poorer health outcomes and higher risk of premature death. SDOH, including the effects of centuries of racism, are key drivers of health inequities in communities of color. Their effect is pervasive and deeply embedded in our society. They create inequities in access to many social and economic benefits, including housing, education, wealth, and employment. These inequities put people at higher risk of poor health.

For more information, visit [Social Determinants of Health at CDC](#).

You can structure your National DPP lifestyle change program in a way that helps your employees overcome challenges caused by SDOH. Use this resource to help you make decisions about how you will deliver and administer your program to ensure its success.

## Delivery Methods

Before you decide whether to deliver your program in-person, virtually, or through a combination of these methods, consider how SDOH may affect your employees' ability to attend program sessions. For example, they may not be able to participate in person if they don't have affordable childcare or reliable transportation. They won't be able to participate virtually if they don't have access to an electronic device or reliable internet service.

To help you decide how to deliver your program, consider the following questions:

- Do your employees have:
  - Childcare needs or other family commitments that make it hard to participate in person?
  - Reliable access to an electronic device, such as a computer, tablet, or smart phone?
  - Reliable internet access and a phone data plan?
- Can you provide the program on-site during work hours with support from management and policies to encourage participation?
- If the program is offered off-site, can you offer:
  - A time that works for employees?
  - A location that employees can travel to safely, including by reliable public transportation?
  - Payments to employees to help them cover their transportation costs?

## Program Costs and Reimbursement Models

Costs for the National DPP lifestyle change program are influenced by several factors, including how the payment or reimbursement model is structured and strategies you use to encourage healthy habits. Commercial reimbursement models for coverage include fee-for-service, attendance-based, and performance-based or outcome-based payment.

You should choose a program design that reduces financial barriers to participation and reduces barriers to meeting program outcomes. To help you make decisions about costs and your reimbursement model, consider the following questions:

- Do all of your existing medical, pharmacy, or wellness plans that cover the National DPP lifestyle change program offset costs to employees?
- Can you offer incentives, such as insurance premium offsets for employees who participate in the program?
- What strategies can you use to cover program costs for employees who are not enrolled in one of your existing plans?
- Can you provide healthy food options, such as snacks and lunches, for participants for free or at a reduced cost?
- Do employees have convenient places for physical activity near the worksite? For example, do they have access to safe places to walk or a low-cost fitness center?
- Do you pay all of your employees enough to cover the cost of living in their community? What effect do wages have on the health of your employees?

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Consider implementing screening for SDOH and demographic factors that may put employees at higher risk for type 2 diabetes. This will support your efforts to monitor and address your employee's specific barriers to participation and program success.

## Benefit Administration Options

You can administer your program in one of three ways: as part of existing health, pharmacy, or wellness coverage; through a contract with a CDC-recognized organization; or by becoming a CDC-recognized organization.

Assess each option and choose the one that can provide a program that is tailored to your specific workforce. Your program should be inclusive and responsive to challenges associated with SDOH.

### Regardless of which benefit administration path you choose, consider the following:

- Are employees who are at the highest risk for prediabetes covered by one of your organization's medical, pharmacy, or wellness plans or vendors?
- If these employees are not covered, but want to participate in the National DPP lifestyle change program, can you help them find a program through [CDC's Find a Program](#) link?
- Can you tailor your communication methods to ensure that you're reaching as many of your employees as possible? You should consider factors such as literacy levels, language barriers, cultural preferences, and distribution channels.
- Do you or your vendor have access to additional community resources or local data that may be relevant to your employee population?
- How can you leverage your knowledge of the local community? For example, can you or your vendor connect program participants to community resources and help build social connectedness beyond the program?
- Can the program be tailored to meet your employee's specific needs, especially those associated with SDOH?
- Can you identify people who are connected to, trusted by, and representative of the local community to serve as Lifestyle Coaches?
- Can you adapt the curriculum to be more culturally appropriate for your workforce? And use or create versions that are in languages other than English, if needed?

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