



Partnering to prevent chronic disease and improve health outcomes  
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At its heart, medicine is about improving the lives of our patients. And the fact is that more of our patients are living with chronic diseases now than ever before.

The numbers are staggering. Half of all visits to primary care physicians are for chronic disease management, and nearly 90 percent of all health care spending in the United States is for people battling one or more chronic medical conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Through my work in preventive medicine and public health, I understand the burden that chronic disease places on patients and their families. But, in addition to helping our patients manage the chronic diseases they already face, we must make sure we're working together to help more of our patients prevent these conditions from developing in the first place.

And, that is exactly what the AMA is doing.

As part of our commitment to improving the health of the nation, the AMA is working to prevent some of the country's leading causes of death and disability—chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. However, we know that we cannot do it alone.

The best way for us to reach more patients directly is through partnerships. Our work to prevent type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke is centered on building clinical-community linkages that will enhance the delivery of care and enable us to partner with our patients for better health.

We are currently working together with other leading national organizations on critical projects and taking them to scale. For example, we are partnering with the CDC, American Diabetes Association (ADA) and Ad Council to expand awareness of prediabetes, the precursor to type 2 diabetes, by asking Americans to visit "[Do I Have Prediabetes.Org](#)" and take a simple test to determine their risk.

In July, we launched the second phase of that national PSA campaign which aims to reach the more than 84 million Americans living with prediabetes—nearly 90 percent of whom don't know they have it and aren't aware of the long-term risks to their health. Viewers are also encouraged to speak with their physician as soon as they discover they may be at risk for prediabetes to confirm their diagnosis and learn about lifestyle changes that will help them prevent type 2 diabetes.

In addition to this highly-visible campaign, the AMA continues to work closely with the CDC on the initiative we launched together in 2015 called ["Prevent Diabetes STAT: Screen, Test, Act – Today"](#)<sup>TM</sup>, which calls on physicians and care teams to make screening and testing their patients for prediabetes a priority and referring those at risk of developing type 2 diabetes to an evidence-based CDC-recognized diabetes prevention program (DPP) within their communities.

We are also forging partnerships to expand enrollment and coverage of effective DPPs, and our work is paying off. Last year, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield implemented coverage of the DPP in two states

and is currently expanding nationwide—a move that is now prompting other national health plans to expand pilots through their physician networks.

Additionally, our work with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to expand coverage of the National DPP to Medicare beneficiaries at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes resulted in a huge victory for America's seniors last year when HHS made the decision to authorize expanded coverage of the program.

We are also seeing progress on our efforts to reduce hypertension and heart disease through our ongoing partnership with the American Heart Association (AHA). As part of the national [Target: BP™](#) initiative launched last year to reduce the number of Americans who have heart attacks and strokes, the AMA and AHA continue to urge physician practices, health systems and patients to prioritize blood pressure control. As a result of this work, nearly 600 health care entities are participating in the initiative.

Through new and continued partnerships, I look forward to helping the AMA continue to make progress in the fight against chronic disease and improve health outcomes for all of our patients. We will not be able to truly improve the health of the nation until, in partnership with our patients, we do a better job of preventing chronic conditions.

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