



Lucent Health
DATA DRIVEN + HUMAN FOCUSED



Narus Health
A LUCENT HEALTH COMPANY

The Right Care Starts With Being There

Improve Health Outcomes
for Employees With Diabetes

See Health Benefits in a New Light

lucenthealth.com



Executive Summary

For self-insured companies, it's critical to offer complex care management and large case management as a health benefit for employees. Having a dedicated support team with experience in specific diseases can make it easier to understand the diagnosis and seek treatment. As a result, employees are more likely to get the help and care they need to manage their illness and reduce associated healthcare costs.

Diabetes is a diagnosis that can touch almost every facet of an employee's life—physical, mental, emotional, occupational, financial and even spiritual. Specialized care management for health plan members dealing with diabetes can help individuals better manage their disease and find treatment options.

Most third-party administrators outsource specialized care management to other vendors, but integrating that service into your health plan administration ensures that the care management perspective is included in decisions about cost, providers and technology resources. Choosing a plan administrator that provides specialized care management can have a positive impact on employees' health outcomes as well as on employers' bottom lines.





How Diabetes Affects Employees

More than **37 million Americans—about 10% of the population—have diabetes**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹ About 1 in 5 of those who have diabetes don't know they have the disease.

When a person receives a diagnosis of diabetes, it can be devastating. In a Harvard-led survey of Americans with serious illnesses such as diabetes, researchers found that those with such diagnoses often feel confused and helpless (62%), fear financial ruin (53%), and experience serious issues with their level of care (61%).²



Care Management Improves Outcomes for Employees With Diabetes

While a serious illness such as diabetes can be life-altering, having a designated person to coordinate medical care can lead to significantly improved outcomes. In the Harvard study, about half of seriously ill patients (49%) reported having a designated care coordinator. Those who had someone in that role overwhelmingly felt it was helpful to them (95%). Those who did not have a care coordinator were more likely to report that they were sent for duplicate tests or diagnostic procedures (31%, compared with 16% who had a care coordinator). Those without a care coordinator were less likely to report that the doctor they rely on most had discussed the cost and charges of their care with them (15%, compared with 42% of those who had a designated coordinator).

When a health plan offers specialized diabetes care for its members, an employee who is diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes can immediately connect with a care coordinator who can help assuage fears and provide actionable advice and information. The care coordinator can walk step-by-step with the employee to manage the disease, recommend and locate technology and devices, provide nutrition and exercise guidance, and even access free or reduced-cost equipment and care.

“A lot of what we do involves educating and providing information to the patient about diabetes and how various choices affect the condition,” says Jana Gaston, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator who manages diabetes care for Narus Health, a Lucent Health Company. “That’s because what they know directly affects their blood sugar and their ability to manage this chronic condition.”

Through education and support, diabetes care managers can help patients control their blood glucose levels, prevent complications or related healthcare issues, and locate resources needed to manage and treat the condition.

In the best-case scenario, diabetes care specialists work as part of a member’s interdisciplinary care team. The entire team might include nutritionists, a primary care physician, specialty physicians, a diabetes educator and an exercise coach.

Through this approach, all professionals involved in the care team communicate with one another and the members with diabetes or pre-diabetes to ensure that the needs of the whole person are being addressed.



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Shortage of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists

Clearly, diabetes care specialists are important partners in the effective treatment and management of diabetes and pre-diabetes. However, many people who have diabetes and pre-diabetes do not have access to the services of these specialized professionals.

Currently, the prevalence of **diabetes is doubling about every 15 years**. And for every certified diabetes educator, there are an estimated 1,600 people with diabetes in need of services, according to a 2020 article published in *Endocrine Today*.³ The American Association of Diabetes Educators predicts a significant increase in demand for diabetes educators through 2025.⁴

These numbers make it clear that many people diagnosed with diabetes are unlikely to get the coaching and compassionate care coordination that can make a huge difference in their health and cost outcomes. By providing specialized diabetes care coordination, self-insured health plans can give their members an in-demand service they may be unable to get elsewhere, while helping to cut costs by ensuring better disease management.



How Health Plan-Provided Diabetes Care Management Works

When a self-insured employer considers offering diabetes care management through its health plan, leaders may wonder whether members would take advantage of the program and how the right members would be identified. At Lucent Health, many qualified plan members know they need a care management program and “raise their hand,” Gaston says. Those who don’t self-identify can often be selected based on claims data, which shows eligibility based on doctor visits and prescription data.

When a plan member who might benefit from diabetes care management is identified, Gaston reaches out to that member and shares information about the program. She undertakes a one-on-one assessment to understand where the patient is in their diabetes journey and track clinical information, as well as start building the patient’s knowledge about their condition. After completing the assessment, Gaston and the patient work together to develop a care plan.

The individual care plan usually includes tracking glucose levels and keeping food logs. The diabetes educator and dietitian provides support for patients through various challenges of living with diabetes, including:



Part of the care plan may include setting goals, such as total cholesterol reduction or lowering triglycerides. After creating a care plan, the patient and the care coordinator commit to regular check-ins every 30 days.

Through a combination of diabetes education and nutritional support, Narus Health’s diabetes care management program has experienced significant positive results. For example, Gaston worked with one plan member who was diagnosed with pre-diabetes. By providing support for exercise and diet, Gaston helped the member’s A1C numbers move from 8.2 to 6.8.

Gaston has years of clinical experience helping patients make healthier choices and improve their quality of life, but she also has deep personal experience with diabetes. “I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes 45 years ago,” Gaston says. “I’m able to use my own experience with the disease to bring empathy and understanding to the people I’m serving. I can meet people where they are and deliver specialized care.”

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Financial Benefits of Diabetes Care Management

With Narus Health's care management platform, members with diabetes (and their selected family members and medical providers) have access to their care team by phone and through secure text messaging. The online platform offers a simple and convenient way for members to log their symptoms and glucose levels, manage prescriptions, find education materials related to diabetes, and share care plans and medical documents, as well as interact with caregivers and members of the care team.

Research shows that online platforms such as Lucent Health's work, both in improving health outcomes and in saving money for members and their health plans. Because diabetes can lead to other conditions and complications, medical expenses for people with the disease are approximately 2.3 times higher on average than for people without diabetes. However, people living with diabetes who use a mobile health platform for care management save approximately \$88 a month in medical costs, according to a 2019 study from the University of California, Berkeley.⁵

Choosing a self-insured health plan administrator that offers integrated diabetes care management is a powerful way to improve members' health outcomes and productivity, while cutting healthcare costs.



To learn more about Lucent Health's complex care management program, visit lucenthealth.com/for-employers

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/library/spotlights/diabetes-facts-stats.html> 2. <https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/94/2018/10/CMWF-NYT-HSPH-Seriously-Ill-Poll-Report.pdf> 3. <https://www.healio.com/news/endocrinology/20200116/with-new-name-diabetes-educators-positioned-to-meet-growing-health-challenges> 4. https://www.diabeteseducator.org/docs/default-source/legacy-docs/_resources/pdf/research/FutureOfDiabetesEducation_TDE.pdf 5. <https://mhealthintelligence.com/news/mhealth-study-shows-cost-savings-through-diabetes-care-management>