

Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES)

Talking Points for Engaging with Healthcare Providers

The talking points below provide messaging to help healthcare providers better understand diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) and its benefits, as well as how to start a new program in their area. These points should be adapted to your speaking style, making them easy to recall and share.

About Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services

- Diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) is an evidence-based practice that helps people learn and improve the skills necessary to care for their diabetes. These services also include activities to help participants maintain these healthy habits over time.
- Whether someone is new to having diabetes or has been living with diabetes for years, DSMES services provide participants training and counseling from a diabetes care and education specialist and an individualized plan to improve overall quality of life through:
 - Setting and tracking goals.
 - Learning practical tips for eating well, staying active and solving problems.
 - Managing diabetes daily, such as self-tracking blood glucose levels and correctly taking medication.
 - Gaining confidence and emotional strength.
 - Getting help from family, friends, community and their healthcare team.
- Personalized and group coaching options are available, which allow participants to learn from and connect with peers who are facing similar challenges.
- Access a full range of DSMES resources at [HHS.Iowa.gov/Diabetes](https://www.hhs.gov/diabetes), including materials to educate and promote these services to staff and patients.

Why Refer Your Patients to DSMES Services

- Patients with diabetes count on their healthcare provider more than any other source of information to help them manage this chronic severe condition. They also need a referral to access DSMES services.
- Diabetes has reached epidemic levels in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (Iowa HHS) reports that 11.6% of adults in the state have been diagnosed with diabetes.¹ An additional 70,000 people have diabetes but don't know it, significantly increasing their health risk.²
- Only a small portion, less than 7% of eligible patients, join DSMES services during their first year after diagnosis.³ As a healthcare provider, you play a vital role in allowing more patients access to these essential services. Referring patients to DSMES services can also help you meet follow-up care guidelines.
- People who participate in DSMES services have higher healthcare satisfaction rates, know more about their condition, follow their treatment, have more positive health outcomes, and have a better quality of care overall.
- Studies show that DSMES services can help people make positive lifestyle changes that can lead to⁴:
 - Improving hemoglobin A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol.
 - Reducing the frequency and severity of diabetes complications.
 - Lowering healthcare costs.
 - Adhering to treatment plans and medications.
 - Managing the emotional aspects of diabetes.

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- Go to HHS.Iowa.gov/Diabetes to find a variety of tools and resources about when and how to refer patients to DSMES services and encourage participation.

Starting a Local DSMES Services Program

- Starting a new diabetes education and support program in your community will improve access to vital services and help decrease the barriers for patients living with diabetes.
- Iowa HHS provides information about the requirements for offering DSMES services, including how to become state-certified for Medicaid and other third-party reimbursement, at HHS.Iowa.gov/Diabetes.

Sources

1. [Iowa Department of Public Health and Human Services, 2022](#)
2. [The Burden of Diabetes in Iowa, American Diabetes Association](#)
3. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
4. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DSMES Toolkit](#)