



Balanced Living with Diabetes

Almost 24 million people in the US currently have diabetes, and that number is expected to rise to 39 million by 2050. Non-Hispanic blacks are almost twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites.

Complications of diabetes increase medical costs, cause disability and decrease quality of life. Examples of complications are kidney disease, foot sores, amputation, blindness and heart disease.

Keeping blood sugar in control for people with diabetes decreases health complications and medical expenses. African Americans benefit even more from controlling blood sugar compared to Caucasians.

This project will provide a community-based diabetes education program called Balanced Living with Diabetes. The program is designed to be delivered in partnership with local Cooperative Extension Agents and healthcare professionals (registered dietitians/certified diabetes educators). Balanced Living with Diabetes will be delivered in collaboration with the health ministry program of Baptist General Convention of Virginia and will target medically underserved areas of Virginia using a community-based participatory approach.

Three churches in each of nine geographic locations will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions: Balanced Living with Diabetes, Balanced Living with Diabetes plus monthly support groups or delayed Balanced Living with Diabetes (for a comparison group). The primary measure will be blood sugar control, measured by glycosylated hemoglobin (hemoglobin A1c). Blood pressure, body weight, and nutrition and physical activity behaviors will also be measured.

Both Cooperative Extension and the BGCVA health ministry are charged with delivering health education programs to communities across the state and have resources available to sustain and disseminate the program if it is found to be successful. A similar approach could also be used in other states.

Tentative locations:

Washington County
Amelia/Nottoway
South Boston
Caroline County

Spotsylvania County
Danville
Petersburg City
Richmond City

Chesterfield County

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