Diabetes is an epidemic in the United States

Every 17 seconds someone is diagnosed with diabetes. Nearly 26 million children and adults in the United States live with diabetes and an additional 79 million have pre-diabetes, placing them at an increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes and its complications. Unless we take action, as many as one in three adult Americans will have diabetes by 2050. The estimated total annual cost of diagnosed diabetes in the United States has risen 41% over the past 5 years, from $174 billion in 2007 to $245 billion in 2012.

Diabetes is an epidemic in AANHPI communities

8.4% of Asian Americans have diagnosed diabetes, according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) national survey data. Although Asian Americans tend to have lower BMIs, they are around 30% more likely to have type 2 diabetes than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. Asian American women are 177% more likely than non-Hispanic white women to develop gestational diabetes, which carries dangerous health consequences during and after pregnancy for both mother and baby, including increased risk of type 2 diabetes.

Certain AANHPI ethnicities have a higher risk of diabetes or poorer outcomes

52.3% of men and 42.4% of women aged 25 to 64 years in American Samoa had type 2 diabetes in 2004. Native Hawaiians have death rates from diabetes 22% greater than the US population as a whole.

Advocacy Efforts: Support Health Reform Implementation

Effective implementation of the Affordable Care Act is essential to ensure people with and at risk for diabetes have access to affordable, quality health insurance. More than one in five Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Korean and Cambodian Americans lacks health insurance, so this community has much to gain from expanded coverage options. The American Diabetes Association’s efforts include supporting the expanded insurance marketplaces, culturally and linguistically appropriate services, eliminating discrimination due to pre-existing conditions, and covering more people under Medicaid.

Efforts to Eliminate Diabetes Disparities

In all of its advocacy efforts, the Association has a commitment to ending health disparities. In addition, the Association supports proposals specifically focused on reducing the disparate impact of diabetes on minority populations. Efforts such as these are needed to understand and address the factors leading to poorer diabetes outcomes in AANHPI communities.

The Gestational Diabetes Act

Asian Americans are disparately impacted by gestational diabetes (GDM), yet there is minimal public health research being conducted on GDM, and there is no coordinated effort to track women with GDM or those at risk of developing the disease. The Gestational Diabetes Act seeks to reduce the incidence of GDM and provides for the development of a multisite gestational diabetes research project within the diabetes program at the CDC to track mothers who have had gestational diabetes and support prevention programs to keep these women from developing type 2 diabetes later in life.

For more information, go to www.diabetes.org/takeaction