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IDHW launches diabetes state plan

The growth of diabetes in Idaho threatens to become a public health crisis: 87,000 Idaho adults are diagnosed with diabetes, while an additional 56,000 adult residents have pre-diabetes.

Fortunately, a new plan of action sets a road map for dealing with this crisis as the Diabetes Alliance of Idaho unveils Idaho's 5-Year Diabetes State Plan in Boise on Friday, June 27. The plan brings together healthcare professionals and key community leaders to reduce the significant problems caused by diabetes, and the disparate burden this disease places on ethnic and racial minorities, rural citizens and the elderly.

The plan will be presented during a morning confer-

ence sponsored by the Diabetes Alliance at the Hilton Garden Inn, 7699 West Spectrum St., beginning at 8:45 a.m. Featured speakers include:

- Rep. Margaret Henbest, a pediatric nurse practitioner who has led the Legislature in dealing with many of the state's complex medical issues;

- Dr. Sherwin D'Souza, an internist who focuses on diabetes. He is an assistant professor at Idaho State University and clinical instructor at the University of Washington; and

- Sam Byrd, a former migrant farmworker who is director of the Centro di Comunidad y Justicia, a non-profit, community based organization.

The Idaho Diabetes State Plan covers four goals to

be addressed during the next five years: *Quality of Care, Access to Care, Prevention of Diabetes and Diabetes Complications, and Policy*. Within each goal, developers of the plan have established interventions to focus on.

As an example, for the goal of improving the Quality of Care, providers can improve by coordinating care between all the healthcare professionals treating a patient. This could include coordination of care by podiatrists, eye specialists, pharmacists, nurses, dietitians, dental professionals, mental health counselors and others.

The threat diabetes poses to our state and country is sobering. Across our nation, \$1 out of every \$5 spent in healthcare goes toward treating someone with diabetes. In Idaho between 1994 and 2004, the number of adults with diabetes increased 48 percent.

Why this increase? Re-

search and data continue to show that obesity and inactivity are culprits in this epidemic. In Idaho:

- "Three out of four adults who have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes are overweight and two out of five adults who have been diagnosed with pre-diabetes are obese.

- A little more than one of four adults with pre-diabetes say they do not participate in leisure time physical activity.

But there is good news: With regular, moderate exercise and a low-fat diet, weight loss of as little as five to seven percent can be linked to a 58 percent reduced risk of diabetes.

A copy of the Idaho 5-Year Diabetes State Plan can be downloaded from diabetesprogram.idaho.gov beginning on June 26. To request a printed copy, please call the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Diabetes Program at 334-4928 or email hartmanm@dhw.idaho.gov.