



Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department is a 1422 recipient implementing multiple strategies across Pierce County, including diabetes prevention.

Preventing Diabetes in Pierce County

SeaMar Community Health Centers, in collaboration with the YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties now offers Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) to their clients in two new locations including a Spanish language cohort.

The YMCA offers DPP at various locations in Pierce County. The most recent DPP cohort of eight participants met their goals and lost a collective 125 pounds.

Pierce County residents have slightly higher rates for diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol and high blood pressure than Washington State residents (WA BRFSS 2011-2013).

It is estimated that one in three adults have prediabetes.

Other strategies for diabetes prevention implemented in Pierce County include increasing referrals to DPP, promoting payor coverage for DP, and increasing access to DPP.

You might imagine many reasons to skip class on a dark, wet Halloween evening, especially if you have an eight-year old daughter and ten-year old son waiting at home to go trick-or-treating. But John and Angela showed up for the Diabetes Prevention Class at the Mel Korum YMCA anyway.

Just a few weeks ago, Angela's doctor told her that her blood sugar levels were higher than they should be. She was scared but she wasn't surprised. After all, there is a history diabetes on her father's side of the family. Angela knew she should lose weight and asked her providers several times about how to get help; but each time she was told her insurance did not cover weight loss services.

When Angela noticed a flyer for the DPP program, the timing was perfect and so was the location at her neighborhood YMCA. Her husband John, also at risk for diabetes, joined the program with her.

After six months, the members of this cohort lost 45 pounds (average 7.5 pounds each), two lost 5% of their body weight and reduced their risk for diabetes by 58%.

Total physical activity minutes reported by participants: 4380

Just a few weeks into the program, they were surprised how much they learned reading food labels and using the information to make informed choices about the food they buy and eat. They appreciate the support of sharing in the group setting. Angela says "you can read books or information online but I would never stick to that. A group is a better way to learn."

John and Angela, along with the rest of their class, say that without the scholarships they couldn't participate in this class. While the class is conveniently located in their neighborhood, John and Angela are willing to drive further if necessary to participate. Their classmates who walk or take the bus do not agree.

John and Angela continue to attend DPP because they want to be healthy. They want to prevent diabetes and the complications that come with it, like checking your blood sugar daily and taking lots of medications, as they have watched their relatives do. And more than anything else, they want their kids to develop healthy habits.