

Diabetes Awareness

Diabetes has become a serious threat to the quality of life and longevity worldwide. Not a disease that discriminates, diabetes strikes from infancy to old age; develops in both the rich and the poor; and, to some degree, affects persons of all races and nationalities. Diabetes is the leading cause of new cases of adult blindness. The only diseases that kill more people than diabetes are heart disease and cancer. Those with diabetes are also susceptible to developing heart disease.

The committee on diabetes awareness:

- Studies the needs of the community and how these needs can best be met.
- Purposes services activities to the club board of directors.
- Assumes responsibility, as directed by the board, for administration of adopted activities.
- Cooperates with other committees who have similar goals.

Organization Meeting

1. Chairman meets with president to discuss goals and budget considerations for the year, and with vice president, who is ultimately responsible for committee operation and duties.
2. Chairman organizes the first meeting, notifying committee members at least one week in advance.
3. Achievements to date and goals are discussed during the initial meeting. A detailed plan of action should be formulated to assure project appropriateness.
4. Chairman presents list of possible activities and encourages discussion of activity merits and shortcomings.
5. Reviews activities in which committee members have expressed interest. Discusses positive and negative aspects, time frame and cost considerations for each activity. - Activities with the most potential for success are chosen.
6. A detailed report of planned activities is submitted to the board of directors.

The following suggestions may be useful in the initial planning of diabetes activities.

Community-Needs Assessment

- Contact local government offices for information on the prevalence and mortality rate of diabetes and whether local medical facilities are equipped to deal with the particular problems caused by diabetes.
- Establish a working relationship with your local diabetes organization. This relationship can be mutually advantageous and will enable you to keep abreast of new developments in the field.
- Conduct a community survey to determine how much people know about diabetes and how many individuals are aware of their possible personal risks of developing diabetes.
- Certain ethnic groups appear to be susceptible to developing diabetes. Find out whether any particular high risk groups reside in your community.

Learning About Diabetes

- Ask a member of your medical community or a diabetes organization, i.e. endocrinologist, nurse, eye care specialist, nutritionist, to speak on the subject of diabetes during a club meeting.
- Attend free classes on diabetes, which are often sponsored by medical centers. If the hospital in your community does not sponsor diabetes classes, encourage administration to implement them.
- Review films and videos developed by diabetes and medical organizations on diabetes.
- Obtain literature on diabetes from International Headquarters and other reliable sources.

Educating the Public

- Develop or purchase diabetes educational literature for distribution to key locations throughout your neighborhood.
- Arrange to have articles or advertisements on diabetes printed weekly in your local newspaper. (Also utilize this source for project publicity.)
- Invite the public to attend lectures on diabetes featuring speakers from your medical community. Explain the importance of the program to the public before or after the lecture.
- Ask your local television or radio station to broadcast information about diabetes.
- Provide local schools or libraries with video tapes, computer disks, literature, etc. on diabetes.

Finding “Hidden” Diabetes

- With the assistance of your medical community, conduct a free diabetes detection screening – preferable in conjunction with a health fair or diabetes lecture. Distribute educational material during the screening.
- To implement the most effective detection screening, test for diabetes at locations where high risk individuals congregate, i.e., senior citizen center, women’s groups.
- Conduct a diabetes detection screening during a club meeting- many Lions fall into the high risk category for developing diabetes. Encourage individuals over forty-through literature, posters, lectures-to have their eyes examined by an eye care specialist annually. (Diabetes can often be detected during an ophthalmologic examination.)

Research

- Donate 25% of the funds raised through your “Journey for Sight” projects to the Lions Clubs International diabetic retinopathy research fund.
- Support your local medical school’s diabetes research efforts. Or, if your local hospital is in need of special equipment to detect or treat diabetes (laser

photocoagulator, kidney dialysis unit) money can be donated to purchase equipment.