

## Why this Goal?

How can America defeat diabetes? If there were one answer, it might be easier. There are many answers to this question and many valid approaches.

Some groups are focused primarily on finding a cure for diabetes. Others are working to improve the treatments available for people with diabetes, to improve their health and reduce suffering. Still others are working to stop the disease before it starts.

All of these approaches are vital components to defeating diabetes in the long term. So how did we choose one specific goal? In the process of developing and setting a national diabetes goal, and engaging the largest number of people, one area stood out — taking on the challenge of preventing type 2 diabetes.

All of us have a stake, directly or indirectly, in preventing type 2 diabetes. Today, there are more than 20 million people with diabetes in America. By 2025, researchers predict that there will be 50 million, with almost all of this growth coming from new cases of type 2 diabetes.

The growth in type 2 diabetes will come from people who are “at risk.” Today, nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults (133 million) are overweight or obese, a key risk factor of diabetes. A recent Gallup® survey showed that one in four adults (24%) has either been diagnosed by a physician as having diabetes (9%) or as being at-risk for diabetes (15%). Another 47% of adults report feeling they could be at-risk, even though they have not been diagnosed. Such potential growth in diabetes has the potential to overwhelm the American health care system and cause enormous pain and suffering.

And so a national goal was set to help stimulate prevention. This goal is ambitious: By 2015, 45% of Americans who are at risk of type 2 diabetes will know their blood glucose level and what actions to take. But with the broad support of everyone — individuals, health care providers, corporations, the nonprofit sector, policy makers, and others — the goal is achievable.

## Why is it important for people to know their blood glucose level?

Diabetes is a disease that is characterized by high levels of blood glucose. For people diagnosed with diabetes, reducing blood glucose levels as close to normal as possible can reduce serious complications of the disease. For people who have blood glucose levels in the pre-diabetic range reducing blood glucose levels can help prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. Thus it is vital for people at risk for diabetes to get tested in a physician’s office or other clinical setting, and learn their blood glucose level, so they can begin to take appropriate action to improve their health.

To have an impact on the future of diabetes in America, there is a general consensus within the diabetes community that we should focus not only on people who have diabetes but also those who are at risk for developing diabetes, in order to help prevent new cases from occurring. Most groups preferred a national goal around identifying those individuals who are living with diabetes unknowingly or have pre-diabetes. If you are at risk, a physician testing blood glucose levels is an important first step toward motivating an individual to learn about and take appropriate actions to prevent diabetes and its complications.

## “How did you determine your goal of 45%, shouldn’t it be higher?”

Our preliminary research indicated 45% is an aggressive yet achievable goal. We examined studies and surveys related to cholesterol testing and awareness, such as National Cholesterol Awareness Survey, as a potential model for the National Diabetes Goal. It was challenging to deduce a steady trend line, but generally speaking, cholesterol awareness rose 3.3 percentage points a year. With our current baseline at

17% and our goal date as 2015, 40% would be a logical number. However, we want to be bolder. We also considered the trends toward increased health prevention, awareness of the impact of chronic disease, and the fight against obesity, which propelled us to be more aggressive with our goal, and thus landed on 45%.

## **Why are you not using the federal government's existing Healthy People 2010 goals?**

Our desire was to focus on a singular goal with the most potential for impact and strongest support not only from the diabetes community but also from the public at large. Healthy People 2010 has 15 goals/objectives for diabetes. This national diabetes goal clearly supports two Healthy People's diabetes objectives: Goal 5-2, "Prevent Diabetes" and 5-4 "Increase the proportion of adults with diabetes whose condition has been diagnosed."

## **Is the National Diabetes Goal endorsing a certain method of testing?**

No, the goal is about the outcome of the testing. It is important that individuals know their blood glucose level and consequently, if they have diabetes or pre-diabetes or are at risk of developing pre-diabetes. The American Diabetes Association's Clinical Practice Recommendations state that there are two tests of blood glucose that can be used in the clinical setting to diagnose diabetes or pre-diabetes. These tests are the fasting plasma glucose (FPG) test and the oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT). The ADA recommends the FPG test as it is more commonly used and is less costly. Each Goal champion needs to make its own determination on testing; however, it is likely that most champions will promote the FPG test, as long as the current ADA recommendations remain in place.

## **How will the Goal supporters go about achieving the Goal?**

Achieving the National Diabetes Goal will take the efforts of companies, organizations and individuals, all working toward the same end.

Organizations that are supporting the Goal have flexibility in how they approach its achievement. Activities are likely to include awareness and educational efforts to reach people at risk of type 2 diabetes and health care providers with information about who is at risk, how to get tested for diabetes, and what actions to take thereafter.

Individuals interested in supporting the Goal can find out if they are at risk of type 2 diabetes and get tested as appropriate. They also can spread the word to family members and friends about the seriousness of type 2 diabetes and the need for people to know their blood glucose number and take appropriate action.

For information about the National Diabetes Goal, visit [www.NationalDiabetesGoal.com](http://www.NationalDiabetesGoal.com).