

*A Diabetes Ten City Challenge update published by the American Pharmacists Association Foundation*

## MAKING A PERSONAL DIFFERENCE

The Diabetes Ten City Challenge (DTCC) is celebrating three years of successfully demonstrating what can happen when people are empowered to understand and take control of their diabetes.



DTCC participants in 10 cities meet regularly with pharmacist coaches for individualized support and education that make a difference in their lives. Patients tell us the program has taught them how to take better care of themselves. They feel better and are more engaged in their self-care. They track and improve their important health outcome measures and, with waived co-pays, they can afford the medications and supplies they need.

Pharmacists see the impact they can make on patients—as counselors, clinicians, and coaches. They give people the time and information necessary to improve their health, set goals and work through the barriers to care.

For employers, the DTCC presents a win-win situation. When employees are engaged and in charge of their care, they feel better. That means happier, healthier and more productive workers—with lower health care costs.

Across the country, participants, pharmacists and employers partnering in the DTCC have reason to celebrate. We congratulate them all and look forward to sharing the program's 12-month clinical and economic results next March. Through the DTCC we have learned valuable information that has built a strong foundation for moving forward, enhancing our program and continuing to grow. It has certainly been a productive and inspiring three years.

—Toni Fera, Pharm.D.  
Senior Director  
Patient Self-Management Programs  
APhA Foundation

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## Partnerships That Change Lives

**B**efore she joined the Diabetes Ten City Challenge (DTCC), diabetes care didn't mean much to Toni Bennett. She took her medication, but felt tired and sluggish much of the time, missing at least two weeks of work each year between diabetes and rheumatoid arthritis flare-ups.

Then, everything changed.

Bennett signed on to work with DTCC pharmacist coaches James Sterrett, Pharm.D., and Chris Dibble, Pharm.D., after hearing them speak at a lunch-and-learn session sponsored by her employer, the City of Charleston, S.C., and Roche Diagnostics.

She hasn't looked back. "This program has changed my life," says Bennett, who works as property management coordinator for the City. "Now I work out three to four times a week at lunchtime, I pay attention

*Pharmacist coaches Chris Dibble, Pharm.D. (left) and James Sterrett, Pharm.D. (right) work out with DTCC participant Toni Bennett at a Charleston-area health club. They often meet her and other participants at the gym or swimming pool to encourage exercise, an important element of keeping diabetes under control.*

to food choices and my blood sugar levels are way down. I've had only one arthritis flare-up this year, where before I had several days a month of excruciating pain."

Bennett not only is more mobile while at work; she has returned after 18 years to a long-lost love—horseback riding. "I ride my horse now, when before there were times I could barely walk down the hall," she said.

### Addressing Individual Needs

Seeing the progress of Bennett and the other 30 DTCC participants whom he coaches is personally rewarding for DTCC pharmacist coach Sterrett. He and Dibble meet with people on-site at the City of Charleston. They are two of hundreds of pharmacists nationwide who are specially trained and certified by the APhA

Foundation in the patient self-management care model used in the Diabetes Ten City Challenge.

“It’s great to see Toni feeling better and more confident in herself,” observes Sterrett, who met Bennett at the health club early on to encourage her to start working out. “When a person is motivated and ready for change, they really respond to the right stimulus. Chris and I have found that by discovering what participants need and want to accomplish, and trying to facilitate that, we can make a real difference in people’s lives.”

The partnership between patients and pharmacists is a key difference between the DTCC and other diabetes management programs. Regular face-to-face meetings help educate participants, keep them on track, and build a supporting relationship that many say is critical to their success.

## Personalized Support

Pharmacist coach Catherine Kuhn, Pharm.D., clinical coordinator at Kerr Drug in Charleston and assistant professor at the South Carolina College of Pharmacy, builds strong relationships with patients so she can understand the personal challenges they face and help them better deal with diabetes.

“When I see their blood sugar numbers are high, I can ask what is going on personally to cause this,” said Kuhn, who sees 21 DTCC participants from the Charleston area’s four participating employers. “People need another person in their support system. I want them to know that I understand living with this condition is difficult, but I also try to educate them about why it is important to keep up with managing diabetes and what they can do to play an active role.”

“Working with Cathy took a lot of frustration out of the daily life of having diabetes,” said Michael Coffey, 56, retired firefighter for the City of Charleston, who was diagnosed seven years ago and began working with Kuhn in November 2007. “She sets attainable goals, and she helps me understand portion sizes and better ways of managing what I eat.”

With Kuhn’s guidance, Coffey began exercising and now takes a 30-mile bike ride three times a week. “When I first went to Cathy, my A1C\* was 8.2 and in less

than four months it was down to 6.4,” he said, noting he also has lost more than 20 pounds since joining the DTCC. “Having my own personal coach makes managing diabetes so much easier. Cathy is never too busy to answer my questions and is very reassuring and motivating.”

## Information and Encouragement

Across the country at the City of Colorado Springs, paramedic and firefighter Jeremiah Heddings, 32, works with pharmacist coach Tammy Lopez, Pharm.D., to understand and manage his Type 1 diabetes. Heddings, who was diagnosed at age 27, joined the DTCC to benefit from the waived co-pays, which help him afford the diabetes medications and supplies he needs to control his condition.

***“If you listen to what your pharmacist coach says, you are going to improve your health and at the same time you won’t spend as much money for your medications. How can you lose?”***

***Michael Coffey, DTCC participant  
Charleston, S.C.***

“Tammy is a huge resource and gives me great support,” Heddings explains. “During our visits, she always has something new to talk about—she downloads my glucose meter, tracks trends, and gives me nutritional advice. There are a lot of emotional aspects to this disease—we firefighters don’t like to have chinks in our armor, but having her support makes it easier.”

As the pharmacist coordinator for the DTCC, Lopez coaches 128 participants at the City’s two employee pharmacies. She advocates for her patients, making sure they know about all the benefits their employer provides, including access to insulin pumps and foot exams from area podiatrists. She has seen DTCC participants improve their health, encourage each other and recruit their friends to join the program. In her view, it’s all about the patient.

“When you empower people to set their own goals, they know what they want to achieve,” Lopez says. “I have patients who are excited to see me when they have accomplished goals. They know I’m

supporting them all the way and trying to help lift them up.”

Retiree Phyllis Kosley, who struggled with her own diabetes for 20 years after seeing its impact on her parents, deeply appreciates the help from Lopez. “Tammy is very caring and interested and really listens,” Kosley says, noting that the program has inspired her to walk 30 minutes a day. “When I need questions answered, I can call her and she returns my calls right away. I am so grateful for this program.”

## Employers See the Benefits

Though he doesn’t know many of the DTCC participants because the program is kept strictly confidential, City of Colorado Springs Risk Supervisor Mark Cauthen sees the aggregate data and hears good news when satisfied members seek him out to share their experiences.

“One person came to my office to thank me and the City for implementing this program,” Cauthen related. “She said because of the program she no longer takes medication for her diabetes and that she is absent from work less often.”

“Our interim economic data already show that our prescription and medical costs are trending down, so these are very good outcomes of the program,” he continued. “The bottom line is that the DTCC makes employees happier and healthier while reducing our health care costs.”

At the City of Charleston, Wellness Programs Manager Jan Park, RN, observes firsthand the knowledgeable pharmacists, who are passionate about the DTCC, helping employees succeed in individual programs customized specifically for them.

“Success in the DTCC increases morale, and employees feel good that someone is looking out for them and providing for them,” Park said. “If people are willing to engage and try to reach the goals they and their coaches set, it can improve their quality of life, help them work longer and literally add years to their lives.”

## DIABETES TEN CITY CHALLENGE SITES

Charleston, SC	Honolulu, HI
Chicago, IL	Los Angeles, CA
Colorado Springs, CO	Milwaukee, WI
Cumberland, MD	Pittsburgh, PA
Dalton, GA	Tampa Bay, FL

\*The A1C laboratory test (also known as glycosylated hemoglobin) measures a person’s average blood glucose control over the past two-to-three months. The American Diabetes Association recommends A1C levels be less than 7. Lower A1C levels are associated with a lower risk of small vessel disease complications, such as kidney disease, blindness, and stroke.

## What Participants Are Saying About the DTCC

*“The new diabetes program is a wonderful resource for information and encouragement. I am so thankful for the opportunity to participate.”*

*“My son was diagnosed with Type I diabetes late last summer, so we joined the DTCC. Frankly, I just wanted the co-pays waived but everything about it has been great. Last Saturday my wife came back with a glowing report about the meeting with their pharmacist coach, saying how wonderful the pharmacist was and the great rapport she had with my wife and our son. Thanks.”*

*“The program is a good support to help you stay on track, and an excellent resource for information. Having an hour set aside allows me to sit down, focus and ask questions without feeling rushed. I take three different medications, and the pharmacist explained what each one does in my body. I also learned that my medications might not have been working right because of how I was taking them. I probably wouldn't have asked my doctor about that.”*

*“When I found out I had diabetes, I was devastated. Since enrolling in this program, I've made major changes in my life, including losing weight and exercising every day. My pharmacist coach has become one of my closest friends and she continues to inspire me at every visit. This program has taken away so much of my fear and truly saved my life.”*

## Pharmacist Coaches Who Care

One-on-one meetings between pharmacists and patients are the cornerstone of the Diabetes Ten City Challenge (DTCC). During regular visits with their pharmacist coaches, DTCC participants learn how to track key indicators such as blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, and the importance of regular eye and foot exams. Through the DTCC, sponsored by the American Pharmacists Association Foundation with support from GlaxoSmithKline, employers establish a voluntary health benefit for employees and their dependents, provide incentives through waived co-pays for diabetes medications and supplies, and help people manage diabetes with support from pharmacists, physicians and diabetes educators.



*Dalton, Ga.-based community pharmacist Jonathan Marquess, Pharm.D., CDE, CDM, takes the blood pressure of Louie Marcus, Hamilton Medical Center employee, as part of their regular DTCC visit. Marquess serves as pharmacist coach for 86 DTCC participants.*

## Flu Season: Vaccine Recommended For People With Diabetes

Vaccination to prevent influenza is particularly important for people with diabetes, who are at increased risk for severe complications from influenza or at higher risk for influenza-associated clinic, emergency department, or hospital visits. The 2008 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control recommends that adults and children with metabolic disorders including diabetes receive the flu vaccine even when it is in short supply.

**For more information on the ACIP Influenza Recommendations, visit: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5707a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5707a1.htm).**

# WHO'S WHO *in the DTCC*



## **Catherine Kuhn, Pharm.D.**

Clinical Coordinator, Kerr Drug, Inc.  
Assistant Professor, S.C. College of Pharmacy  
Medical University of South Carolina Campus

### **Role in the DTCC:**

*Catherine is a pharmacist coach to 21 patients in the DTCC.*

### **Why your organization chose to participate:**

*"Participation allows Kerr Drug and the College of Pharmacy to promote pharmaceutical care and community-based clinical pharmacy services."*

### **Most rewarding part of the experience:**

*"The opportunity to make a personal impact on my patients' lives. I have established close relationships with my patients and provided them with the social support that they may not always have."*

### **Lesson learned:**

*"To ensure success, pharmacist coaches must work with patients to establish goals they show personal interest in achieving, whether it's losing weight, exercising regularly or making other lifestyle changes that will positively impact the way they are managing their diabetes."*



## **James Sterrett, RPh, Pharm.D.**

Independent Community Pharmacist  
Owner, Newton and Associates, LLC  
Assistant Professor, S.C. College of Pharmacy  
Medical University of South Carolina Campus

### **Role in the DTCC:**

*James serves as pharmacist coach to 30 DTCC participants, including many that he meets with on-site at the City of Charleston. He also trains other pharmacists who want to earn their APhA Diabetes Certificate.*

### **Why your organization chose to participate:**

*"The DTCC offers a great opportunity to participate in a model that has the potential to become a standard of practice and demonstrate to everyone the financial rewards of better health."*

### **Most rewarding part of the experience:**

*"The long-term, one-on-one relationships I develop as a diabetes coach—there is nothing like sitting down and helping patients map out a strategy, then watching them take control of their health and their lives."*

### **Lesson learned:**

*"Before the DTCC, I thought of myself as a 'provider,' and was always ready to provide care whether a patient wanted it or not. Through my interaction with DTCC patients, I've learned to listen first and provide second. I've learned it isn't about my agenda—what's important is my relationship with each individual patient and that person's specific needs."*



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