

For Immediate Release
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NOTE: Sandy Walker, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati president/CEO is available for interviews re: the YMCA's perspective and role on the program

David Martorano, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati district vice president, is available for interviews re: the program

YMCA, UnitedHealth Group make evidence-based program to reduce burden of diabetes more accessible to community

April, 2010 – YMCA of the USA, the nation's leading non-profit service organization dedicated to healthy living, and UnitedHealth Group, the nation's largest health insurer, today announced a partnership to reimburse YMCAs offering the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program. This partnership stands to reduce the burden of diabetes, one of the nation's costliest diseases. The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is one of seven YMCAs nationally that will offer this program through UnitedHealth's newly formed Diabetes Prevention and Control Alliance.

The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is launching in a limited number of markets, including Greater Cincinnati over the next few months, but YMCA of the USA is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UnitedHealth Group and others to expand the program and bring it to as many communities as possible nationwide. The program will be available to community members in Northern Kentucky, Greater Cincinnati, and Southeastern Indiana beginning in July.

"Lifestyle interventions delivered through community-based organizations such as the YMCA can save lives and health care dollars," said Sandy Walker, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati president/CEO. "In the past, cost was a barrier to bringing a program such as this to those who would most benefit. However, this unique partnership which brings together the public, private and non-profit sectors is translating research into affordable, real-life prevention strategies."

The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program uses a group-based lifestyle intervention designed especially for people at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. It has been proven to cut participants' chances of developing the disease by more than half.

The YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is based on the landmark Diabetes Prevention Program funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), which showed that with lifestyle changes and modest weight reduction, a person with pre-diabetes can prevent or delay the onset of the disease by 58 percent.

Researchers at Indiana University School of Medicine were able to replicate the successful results of the Diabetes Prevention Program in conjunction with the YMCA of Greater Indianapolis. Unlike the

NIH's program, which was conducted with individuals one-one one, the YMCA's program is conducted in a group setting.

The research conducted by the Indiana University researchers also proved that the YMCA could effectively deliver a group-based lifestyle intervention for about 75 percent less than the cost of the original Diabetes Prevention Program. This research also highlighted the ability of the YMCA to take the program to scale nationally.

The YMCA is committed to making the program available to everyone who meets program criteria, regardless of an individual's insurance coverage. In addition, as evidence of UnitedHealth Group's commitment to solving the nation's diabetes crisis, the company is making the program available to other insurance companies and employer groups that are not its health insurance customers.

Targeted to those who have pre-diabetes, the goals of the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program are to reduce and maintain individual weight loss by at least 7 percent by learning about healthy eating and increasing physical activity to 150 minutes per week.

In a group setting, a trained lifestyle coach helps participants attain healthier lifestyles by teaching about healthy eating, increasing physical activity and other behavior modifications over the course of 16 core sessions. After the initial sessions, participants meet monthly for up to a year for added support in maintaining their progress.

"Providing support and opportunities that empower people to be healthy and live well is part of the YMCA's charitable mission," said Walker. "The fact that a third-party payer is reimbursing a lifestyle program that focuses on prevention – especially a group-based program – represents a major paradigm shift in health care delivery in our country. YMCAs are poised to be part of a new health care delivery system that focuses on disease prevention."

About the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati: As the area's largest youth and family-focused not-for-profit, the YMCA reinforces character values through assets-based programs and services to more than 143,000 individuals, kids and families annually. Adult mentors encourage young people to be caring, responsible, respectful, and honest through sports, summer camps, structured child and afterschool care, and leadership building programs. Branches offer quality time for families, resources for parents, and a variety of opportunities for seniors to be active. The Membership for All sliding scale fee structure means everyone, no matter their ability to pay, can always benefit from the YMCA. Last year alone more than 17,400 families and individuals enjoyed healthier and happier lives because generous partners helped the YMCA in its vision to be accessible to all.