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# Foreword

## Diabetes and African Americans

Sometimes it seems as if everyone knows someone who is affected by diabetes. More than 1 in 9 African American adults have diabetes. African Americans are 1.8 times as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of the same age<sup>1</sup>. Researchers estimate that if diabetes continues to increase at its current rate, 1 in 3 children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime—unless something changes.

Diabetes can cause heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, lower-limb amputations, and blindness, but it doesn't have to. In many cases it is possible to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes in people at high risk. Scientists who conducted the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) study<sup>2</sup> found that people can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes by losing some weight (5–7 percent of their weight), eating a healthy diet (low fat, lower calorie), and increasing their physical activity. High-risk adults who participated in the study's "lifestyle modification" activities reduced their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58 percent; they lost 5 to 7 percent of their body weight (10–15 pounds for a person weighing 200 pounds) by eating a lower fat diet and having a modest, consistent increase in physical activity (e.g., walking 5 days per week, 30 minutes per day).

Dr. James R. Gavin III, past chair of the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) and former president of the American Diabetes Association, understands the burden diabetes has placed on the African American community. "Diabetes is a growing epidemic in our communities," notes Dr. Gavin. "If we are going to make a difference, we need to reach people where they live, work, and play." This new NDEP curriculum, *Power to Prevent: A Family Lifestyle Approach to Diabetes Prevention* was developed to help bring diabetes prevention and control to African American communities. The *Power to Prevent* curriculum is composed of 12 sessions that are designed to help people bring healthier habits into their lives to prevent diabetes. These same skills—eating more healthily and increasing physical activity—can also help people who have diabetes control the disease.



*Dr. James R. Gavin III*

This curriculum is a companion piece to the NDEP Small Steps. Big Rewards. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes campaign to help the African American community take steps to prevent or delay diabetes. Small Steps. Big Rewards includes tip sheets and booklets such as the GAME PLAN toolkit for diabetes prevention. The aim of the *Power to Prevent: A Family Lifestyle Approach to Diabetes Prevention* curriculum is to guide people in the use of these NDEP tools and to help them support one another in making changes toward a healthier lifestyle. By taking small steps to implement healthy lifestyle behaviors, African Americans can reap big rewards, such as delaying or preventing type 2 diabetes and its complications.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Diabetes Fact Sheet: General Information and National Estimates on Diabetes in the United States, 2004. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Diabetes Prevention Program Research Group. Reduction in the incidence of type 2 diabetes with lifestyle intervention or metformin. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2002 Feb; 346(6):393-403. <http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/abstract/346/6/393>.