

## The Impact of Diabetes

**Diabetes** is a chronic metabolic disorder resulting in health impairment and leading to increased economic burden on patients and healthcare systems around the globe. With an impact of over 300 million people worldwide, diabetes has become the fastest developing chronic disease. Most people with the condition have type 2 diabetes. There are about 27 million people in the U.S. with it. Another 86 million have **prediabetes**: their blood glucose is not normal, but not high enough numbers to be diabetes yet. Based on a CDC report from 2017, 28,000 people in Wyoming over the age of 55 were diagnosed with diabetes.

Diabetes is a chronic disease associated with a ten-year-shorter life expectancy. Treating diabetes requires a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment of the condition and prevention of associated complications. This is partly due to a number of complications with which it is associated, including: two to four times the risk of cardiovascular disease, including ischemic heart disease and stroke; a 20-fold increase in lower limb amputations; and increased rates of hospitalizations. Type 2 diabetes is the largest cause of non-traumatic blindness and kidney failure. It has also been associated with an increased risk of cognitive dysfunction and dementia, and frequent infections.

Diabetic neuropathy is a type of nerve damage that can occur if you have diabetes. High blood sugar (glucose) can injure nerves throughout your body. Diabetic neuropathy most often damages nerves in the legs and feet. Foot complications, which more often affect older adults, have the capacity to diminish a person's quality of life.

A previously published study showed that the average annual expenditure of diabetic foot care is \$8,659.00 per patient. The total medical cost for the management of diabetic foot disease in the United States (US) ranges from \$9 billion to \$13 billion in addition to the cost for management of type 2 diabetes alone. It is estimated that in all diabetic related amputations, 85% are caused by foot ulceration which further deteriorates to chronic infection and amputation. Preventing these complications, understanding the risk factors, and having the ability to manage complications outside of the clinical encounter is an important part of a diabetes foot care management. McCook-Martinez et al. (1979) found that when patients were properly informed about foot care, disease-associated morbidity, hospitalization, and amputation rates were lower than for those that did not have foot care information.

Specialty care services are not readily available in most of Wyoming due to the state's rural and frontier setting. Frequently, people in Wyoming are forced to travel great distances in or-

der to receive health care. This issue is frustrated further if a specialist is needed. Wyoming currently has 6 endocrinologists and 35 podiatrists statewide.

## Senior Centers Rise to the Challenge

Wyoming's Senior Centers are hard at work to meet these challenges. Senior Centers are collaborating and coordinating foot care services with available community providers to provide this specialty foot care services in some of the rural communities around the state. These services include podiatry examination, diagnosing and treatment, and follow-up services, as well as toenail clipping clinics. Foot self-care behaviors, including daily inspection of feet, professional treatment, hygiene, and proper shoes help minimize the risk of foot complications.

"We had one of our seniors who went to Sheridan for a podiatrist procedure. She was able to come to the center for a follow-up appointment without having to drive back to Sheridan. There are many such instances of how important this service is to our seniors," said AJ Mock Buffalo Senior Center Executive Director.

Lois Yoakum, the Service Coordinator at Buffalo Senior Center added: "Many seniors wonder when their feet got to be so far away. Things like trimming one's toenails gets more difficult as the years go by".

Jerry, a foot care program participant at the Buffalo Senior Center, indicated, "I rely on this service tremendously. By all means it is important. Because the calluses on my feet grow so fast that they have to be removed regularly. If they get too thick, they can crack and become infected and that is a bad deal because of my diabetes. I also get my special diabetic shoes through the Foot Care Center. My feet are different sizes. The doctor has a special method to measure my feet and then he has a better understanding of what each foot needs, which Medicare pays for."

Zola, 88, another program participant at Buffalo Senior Center added, "Dr. Kane is willing to keep trying new things to help me with my pain and discomfort. There are things he simply can't do at the center, but it is so much handier to be able to come to the center to see him for regular appointments than drive to Sheridan."

Bob, 78, a program participant in Buffalo, has been seeing the podiatrist for almost two years. "I can't get close to my feet, and if I can, then I can't see them. It's tricky and dangerous to get my foot up on the counter in my bathroom to cut my toenails," he said. "I have hammertoes that the doctor keeps an eye on, checks for fungus or athlete's foot and trims my toenails."

# CLS Newsletter

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Barbara, another Buffalo program participant, 80, is also a diabetic. “The doctor trims my toe-nails and always does a diabetic foot check for me. It is less of a hassle to be able to come to the center to see the doctor instead of going all the way to Sheridan, especially since I don’t drive,” she said. “I’m very happy this service is offered at the center.”

Wyoming Senior Centers which provide foot care and toe-nail services are listed on the next page.

A listing of Wyoming Senior Centers is enclosed for your reference: <https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Title-III-B-Supportive-Services-Program-Services-and-Eligibility-Criteria.pdf>

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Senior Center	Podiatrist Exam & Follow-Up Care	Toe-Nail Clipping and Referral Services by RN and CNA
Buffalo Senior Center	Podiatrist from Sheridan - a few times per month and as needed basis	A few times per month
Converse County Aging Services		Both Glenrock and Douglas sites
Golden Hour Senior Center		3rd Thursday of the month
Goshen County Senior Friendship Center		3rd Thursday of the month
High Country Senior Citizens		1st Friday of the month at Warm Valley Center
Lander Senior Citizens Center		3rd Thursday of the month
Niobrara Senior Center		In Progress - TBD
Powell Senior Citizens, A Go-Go		3rd Tuesday of the month
Rendezvous Pointe	Podiatrist, every other month	3rd Thursday of the month
Riverton Senior Citizens Center		3rd Thursday of the month
Senior Center of Jackson Hole	Podiatrist, once a month	Various times per month
Services for Seniors		Twice per month at both sites and once a month in Guernsey
Washakie County Senior Citizens	3rd Thursday of the month	
Weston County Senior Services		1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month