



IMPROVING HEALTH, CHANGING LIVES THROUGH DIABETES PREVENTION

For team members at the UCLA Luskin Conference Center and UCLA Lake Arrowhead Lodge, there is no shortage of health and wellness programs to participate in. One is the Diabetes Prevention Program, a [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Diabetes Program \(DPP\)](#) designed for people who are at risk of diabetes or who have been diagnosed as being pre-diabetic, although in rare cases individuals already diagnosed with diabetes have been permitted to enroll.

DPP was introduced on the UCLA campus in 2016. After learning about America's diabetes epidemic — [more than 100 million Americans live with diabetes](#) and a [majority of California adults have prediabetes or diabetes](#) — and the success of those participating in the campus program, Pete Angelis, assistant vice chancellor for UCLA Housing and Hospitality, pondered what he might do to support at-risk employees in his department.

“It was mind-blowing to me,” said Angelis, noting that he was especially struck by the fact that diabetes affects approximately one in three adults in this country. “We have roughly 3,000 team members in our department and based on the figures given, 1,000 of them were at risk for Type 2 diabetes.”

So, he brought the program to his staff, including those who work at the Luskin Conference Center and Lake Arrowhead Lodge.

DPP features hour-long, in-person sessions scheduled through one year. Sessions are led by trained UCLA staff members and enrollment is offered each month.

UCLA is among the first universities in the country to offer the program as part of its employee health and wellness efforts.

Participants track their progress through weigh-ins and reporting the amount of exercise they are completing each week. The goal is for participants to lose 5 to 7 percent of their body weight

overall and exercise a minimum of 150 minutes per week. Classes are administered in small group settings and focus on nutrition, exercise and healthy habits.

Hedy Varga, senior group sales manager at the Luskin Conference Center participated in DPP in 2018. At the time, her A1C level was .1 percentage point from a pre-diabetic level, she said, adding that her BMI was nearly 30. “I just wanted to take control of my health.”

While in DPP, she shed more than 20 pounds and improved her A1C and BMI scores.

Varga was so appreciative of her time in DPP that she later signed up to become a program trainer to support her colleagues as they worked to become healthier and develop new lifestyle habits.

“I am blessed to work for an organization that cares this much about their employees' health that they would institute such a program during work hours, so that we're paid to learn about health and get healthier.”

Ninety miles east of the UCLA campus, high in the San Bernardino Mountains, Brian Good, who has been the food service director at the Lake Arrowhead Lodge since 2005, was also struggling with concerns about diabetes. The program helped him learn to eat smarter and know which foods to avoid, and he continues to use this knowledge in his day to day life when making choices about eating. Besides learning to manage his own health better, Good said that he has also passed what he has learned through DPP on to others.

“I learned a lot about diabetes prevention and I am grateful for having had the opportunity to participate,” said Good. “It is a terrific program that benefits the staff, as well as our workplace.”

There's no better time than now to help your employees take charge of their health. Visit the CDC website to learn how to [establish a Diabetes Prevention Program in your workplace](#) for the benefit of your employees, their families and your entire organization.