

## POLICY & PRACTICE

### Number of Diabetics on the Rise

The number of people with diabetes in the United States now stands at 24 million, an increase of more than 3 million from about 2 years ago, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Another 57 million are thought to have prediabetes, with 25% unaware that they have it, a decrease of 5 percentage points from 2 years ago. The data "have both good news and bad news," Dr. Ann Albright, director of the agency's Division of Diabetes Translation, said in a statement. "It is concerning to know that we have more people developing diabetes, and these data are a reminder of the importance of increasing awareness of this condition, especially among people who are at high risk. On the other hand, it is good to see that more people are aware that they have diabetes. That is an indication that our efforts to increase awareness are working, and more importantly, that more people are better prepared to manage this disease and its complications." The data show that diabetes continues to disproportionately affect the elderly; almost 25% of those aged 60 years and older had diabetes in 2007. And disparities among ethnic groups continue to persist: After adjustment for population age differences between groups, the rate of diagnosed diabetes was highest among Native Americans and Alaska Natives at 17%, followed by blacks with 12%, and Hispanics at 10%, Asian Americans at 8%, and whites at 7%.

### Pesticide Exposure and Diabetes

Long-term pesticide exposure may increase the risk of diabetes, according to a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology. Researchers at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences studied more than 30,000 pesticide applicators who used chlorinated pesticides on more than 100 days over their lifetime; specific pesticides increased diabetes risk anywhere from 20% to 200%, the study found. A total of 1,171 applicators developed diabetes after enrollment; researchers compared their pesticide use and other potential risk factors with those from applicators who did not develop diabetes and adjusted for age, body mass index, and smoking. Among the 50 different pesticides studied, 7—aldrin, chlordane, heptachlor, dichlorvos, trichlorfon, alachlor, and cyanazine—increased the likelihood of diabetes among study participants who had ever been exposed to any of these pesticides. "The results suggest that pesticides may be a contributing factor for diabetes along with known risk factors such as obesity, lack of exercise, and having a family history of diabetes," said Dale Sandler, Ph.D., chief of the institute's epidemiology branch and a study coauthor. "Although the amount of diabetes explained by pesticides is small, these new findings may extend beyond the pesticide applicators in the study."

### Feds Seek Help in Bone Campaign

The federal government is reaching out to organizations that promote bone health and girls' health to help to increase national awareness of behaviors that con-

tribute to good bone health in girls. The Office of Women's Health at the Department of Health and Human Services recently issued a request for groups to offer advice on the development and dissemination of campaign materials related to the National Bone Health Campaign. The campaign is aimed at helping girls increase their consumption of calcium and of vitamin D and weight-bearing physical activity with the goal of building strong bones. The national social marketing campaign will target girls, parents, and health care providers.

### Performance-Enhancing Drug Bill

Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Calif.) has introduced a measure to help eliminate the use of performance-enhancing drugs by high school athletes. The High School Sports Anti-Drug Act would require the secretary of Education to award grants to states to pilot random drug-testing programs. It would require a parent's written consent before a student could be tested for drugs, and grantees would have to provide recovery, counseling, and treatment programs for students who test positive for performance-enhancing agents. The proposed legislation also would require grantees to spend at least 10% of their

grant funds on drug abuse prevention. Rep. Gallegly recommends funding for the act of \$10 million in 2009 and \$20 million in 2010 and in 2011. "The recent Major League Baseball steroids scandal and Marion Jones' being stripped of her Olympic medals show how prevalent the use of performance-enhancing drugs is in amateur and professional sports," Rep. Gallegly said. "Our high school athletes look up to these athletes and are under tremendous pressure to succeed. It's important ... to give them the opportunity to resist the pressure to use steroids and other dangerous performance-enhancing drugs."

—Joyce Frieden

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