

CHIP lifestyle program at Vanderbilt University demonstrates an early ROI for a diabetic cohort in a workplace setting: A case study

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Abstract

Several studies have found a strong dose-response relationship between most chronic diseases and lifestyle-related risk factors. This study examined the feasibility of a comprehensive, workplace-based, intensive lifestyle training program, to help type 2 diabetics alter the course of their disease within relatively short (6, 12 and 24-month) measurement windows. An additional purpose of this study was to determine whether health care cost savings could be achieved for the lifestyle group when compared to non-intervened type 2 diabetics within the same employer-sponsored health plan. The Vanderbilt CHIP study measured participants' pre- and post-intervention health care costs (total medical and prescription drug) and health services utilization on a year-over-year (YOY) basis and compared them with the costs and utilization of the other (non-intervened) diabetics of the plan. Biometric and lab data were collected at the beginning and end of the program and six months after the study's conclusion to document immediate and long-term changes in health outcomes and health risk behaviors. Our six-month findings provide evidence that educating a member population about the benefits of a plant-based, whole-foods diet is feasible and can reduce associated health care costs.