



Tackling Diabetes in Alabama

Impact Statement

The Problem/Issue:

Alabama leads the nation in diabetes with more than 440,000 citizens diagnosed with the disease. The growth rate for new cases is 30 percent above the national average. It is estimated that diabetes is costing Alabama businesses more than \$3 billion annually.

What's Been Done:

Extension tackled diabetes as an education problem. A team of 45 Extension specialists and agents devoted more than 650 days to forming community coalitions and support groups as well as organizing and holding workshops, seminars and cooking schools to educate Alabamians about diabetes, its risks and its management. It is estimated that these efforts reached several thousand Alabamians with important information on diabetes. Programs varied among counties depending on citizen needs. In Montgomery County (an urban county and home to the state capital), more than 112 people attended a two-day workshop aimed at educating professionals and lay persons with research-based information on how to convey to the public the gravity of the disease and the importance of being in tested. In rural Choctaw County, more than 200 people were tested for diabetes as part of a countywide health fair. In Lowndes County, more than 20 diabetics attended a six-week educational series addressing topics from nutrition to foot care and stress management.

Why We Care:

Extension has effectively used its access to research and its county-based delivery system to reach people with vital information on diabetes, a major health issue in Alabama. In particular, Extension has been able to reach individuals in a variety of audiences, including urban, rural, culturally diverse and limited resource audiences. Extension is confident that this education will help increase knowledge and skills as well as reduce the risk factors associated with chronic disease.

