



## **New pilot aims to inspire healthy behavior and prevent diabetes**

*Alberta health organizations partner with digital health innovator to pilot AI-enhanced virtual Diabetes Prevention Program.*

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A digital Diabetes Prevention Program that is delivered through a smartphone app is being piloted in Alberta. This app provides participants with 1:1 support from health coaches virtually in order to promote healthy lifestyles and better manage risk factors.

The offering of this year-long lifestyle change program is a collaboration between Alberta Blue Cross, Alberta Health Services' (AHS) Diabetes, Obesity & Nutrition Strategic Clinical Network™ (SCN), primary care providers, and Yes Health – a leading digital health provider focused on weight loss, diabetes prevention and concierge health coaching.

This virtual Diabetes Prevention Program is available to eligible Albertans through participating primary care providers, and is aimed at preventing type 2 diabetes among adults who have prediabetes.

In Alberta, approximately 667,000 people live with prediabetes – which places individuals at a much higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes because of having higher than normal blood glucose levels. The province had the largest increase in diabetes prevalence in Canada over the last 10 years, and the rate of type 1 and type 2 diabetes is expected to rise another 44 percent over the next decade.

“Preventing diabetes is a key health priority in Alberta where more than one quarter of the population lives with a form of the disease,” says Tracy Wasylak, SCNs Chief Program Officer. “This innovative diabetes prevention program brings together a diverse group of partners with a keen interest in improving and streamlining care across three important and inter-connected areas of health – diabetes, obesity and nutrition.”

The Yes Health platform provides the right balance of team and technology. It blends artificial intelligence with in-the-moment human coaching to allow members to virtually engage with coaches at any time and access resources on nutrition and exercise on demand. The Yes Health platform also includes machine-vision technology where members can take pictures of their meals and get artificial intelligence-supported, health-coach-driven guidance on how to make them healthier.



It will appeal to those who want on-demand support and advice – and no more calorie-counting, strict diets, or scheduling of phone or video appointments—just practical, in-the-moment feedback on meals, workouts, groceries, or other questions.

Selected for its well-demonstrated success and track record in supporting health interventions, [Yes Health](#) was the vendor chosen to prepare this virtual Diabetes Prevention Program in Alberta in order to help address prediabetes and reduce the onset and costs of type 2 diabetes.

Recognized by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Yes Health is an all-mobile diabetes prevention platform that supports people living with prediabetes in making healthier decisions at the exact time they need it. The platform helps members address weight gain—the number one modifiable risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes. Because of its easy-to-use interface, and asynchronous interactions with coaches, members have a very high engagement rate and an 87 percent completion rate.

“This partnership marks a significant milestone for our organization in the fight against type 2 diabetes. It comes at an important time, as people living with prediabetes and type 2 diabetes often have higher risk of serious COVID-19 complications, as well as other long-term health complications,” says Mark Komlenic, President and CEO of Alberta Blue Cross. “As an organization dedicated to promoting health and wellness, we’re excited to be part of this program and look forward to the outcomes.”

Online and digital health platforms have become essential as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this pilot, Alberta Blue Cross and AHS will provide free access to Yes Health’s year-long virtual Diabetes Prevention Program to approximately 500 Albertans with prediabetes. The pilot aims to determine how best to integrate programs like Yes Health into primary care to ensure the continuity of care for patients.

Eligible participants will be identified by physicians and primary care networks that have agreed to be part of the pilot. The pilot project will evaluate how successful the virtual Diabetes Prevention Program is at supporting lifestyle modification and sustainable weight loss for Albertans living with prediabetes. Determinants of program success will focus on overall engagement and weight loss rather than a reduction in claims.



“Healthcare consumers today expect access to digital health solutions along with their regular in-person care, and it’s vital that all stakeholders deliver on those expectations with innovative programs that blend cutting-edge technology with personalized, human support,” says Alexander Petrov, founder and CEO of Yes Health. “That’s why we’re excited about this landmark pilot partnership. It’s a great example of what can happen when the digital health sector works hand-in-glove with the payer, provider and public health communities to address and prevent one of the most debilitating and costliest chronic conditions.”

For more information about this pilot project, eligibility requirements, or which providers are participating, contact [vdpp@ahs.ca](mailto:vdpp@ahs.ca), or visit [www.ahs.ca/vdpp](http://www.ahs.ca/vdpp).

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