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Consensus reached on self-monitoring in diabetes

EDMONTON – After two days of discussion, a panel of experts has reached a consensus on whether people with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes need to test their blood sugar on a daily basis. The panel came to the following conclusions:

By 2010, three million Canadians will be living with diabetes. Self-monitoring, properly utilized and properly funded is one of the tools that will assist people living with diabetes.

The panel concludes that the following actions will improve the appropriate utilization of self-monitoring.

- *All people with Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes on insulin or are taking drugs that increase the body's own insulin supply (secretagogues) should be covered in each jurisdiction for self-monitoring supplies on the same basis as medically necessary drugs.*
- *Educators and health-care providers should be encouraged to partner with patients to ensure that monitoring results are regularly used to optimize care.*
- *Insurance plans providing coverage for self-monitoring should review program criteria to ensure value for money.*

“Diabetes is a growing health problem in our society,” said Michael Decter, the conference’s panel chair, “and has been described as an epidemic that will financially burden our health-care system.”

While numerous strategies have been proven to be successful in preventing diabetes, such as modifications to lifestyle and various drugs, these approaches are not widely used. “The diagnosis of diabetes is often times delayed,” Decter said. “It’s estimated that there’s an average of eight years between the onset of diabetes and its diagnosis. Investments in early diagnosis and early treatment have been described as leading to long-term savings in costs.”

The statement will now be published and circulated widely in Canada’s scientific community. It is available to media on request.

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