

## **Raising Awareness to Improve Diabetes Care**

*West Virginia program partners with local Quality Improvement Organization*

### **Public Health Problem**

- West Virginia has a much higher rate of diabetes than the rest of the nation.
- Raising awareness of the importance of preventive services and self-management among people with diabetes makes it more likely that they'll ask for and get services that can prevent costly and even life-threatening complications of their disease.
- Surveys show that significant numbers of West Virginian's with diabetes do not get needed eye and foot exams or blood sugar monitoring tests, such as the A1c test.

### **Program**

- A series of public service announcements on diabetes were developed for radio and television broadcast in West Virginia.
- The segments focused on the importance of specific clinical tests and exams that are recommended for people with diabetes, such as flu examination, eye examination, and the A1c test for monitoring blood sugar levels. Certain announcements highlighted the importance of flu and pneumonia shots for those with diabetes and all segments included the phrase "Ask your doctor for more information."
- A contract with the West Virginia Broadcasters Association guaranteed broadcast of the messages and over thirteen thousand diabetes-related radio and television public service announcements were aired in selected markets in West Virginia over six months.
- West Virginia Medical Institute, the state's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, coordinated diabetes materials with the broadcast messages for its physician and beneficiary newsletters and weekly television program.

### **Impact**

- Nearly all residents surveyed in an evaluation of the message broadcasts said they had seen or heard the diabetes announcements.
- Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes who had higher exposure to the announcements were more likely to say that they took action based on the messages than those with less exposure.
- An American Journal of Preventive Medicine article documents the effectiveness of the mass media campaign in raising awareness.