

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **GMCF offers free diabetes education in 12 counties**

More than 20 million Americans have diabetes, nearly 6 million have it but don't even know it, and another 57 million have pre-diabetes, placing them at increased risk for developing the chronic disease. It has become the greatest public health crisis of the next quarter century, affecting African-Americans and Hispanics disproportionately. For example, African-Americans are 1.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than Caucasians.

In Georgia, diabetes is the seventh leading cause of death. It is estimated that 500,000 Georgians have been diagnosed with diabetes, while another 200,000 are unaware that they have the disease. Diabetes can lead to serious complications, such as heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, eye damage, or nerve damage that can lead to amputations if it is not managed and controlled properly.

March 24<sup>th</sup> is American Diabetes Alert® Day. This day recognizes the urgent need for Georgians to find out their risk for type 2 diabetes by taking a Diabetes Risk Test. The test includes simple questions about weight, age and family history, and is available in both English and Spanish.

Researchers believe that individuals who have been diagnosed with diabetes benefit from learning more about their diabetes by attending self-management classes. That's why a Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) program is so important, especially for Georgians who have been diagnosed with diabetes.

Georgia Medical Care Foundation, the state's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, offers diabetes self-management classes free of charge to eligible African-American and Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries in the following counties: Bibb, Dougherty, Muscogee, Clayton, Fulton, Richmond, Cobb, Gwinnett, Spalding, DeKalb, Henry and Troup. These informative sessions provide information on managing diabetes, with topics such as meal planning, physical activity, warning signs, and more. Classes are underway now at dozens of convenient locations. To find the class closest to you, call 888-813-WELL (9355) or visit [www.gmcf.org/diabetes](http://www.gmcf.org/diabetes).

GMCF is a not-for-profit, physician-sponsored organization dedicated to continuously improving health care. In operation since 1970, GMCF provides innovative health care solutions focused on quality improvement, utilization management, medical review, and health care outcomes research. For more information, visit [www.gmcf.org](http://www.gmcf.org).

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