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## **GMCF helps 500 Georgians control their diabetes**

Georgia Medical Care Foundation (GMCF) has taught more than 500 people with diabetes how to control their disease, and the company's free classes continue to grow in popularity. GMCF, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Georgia, offers free diabetes education classes in more than a dozen counties including the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Researchers believe that individuals who have been diagnosed with diabetes benefit from attending "diabetes self-management education." They study topics such as meal planning, physical activity, warning signs and more. GMCF offers the classes free of charge to eligible African-American and Hispanic Medicare beneficiaries as a way to reduce health disparities in minority populations. Hundreds of participants have graduated so far this year, after visiting one of 170 training sites statewide. The program is a part of the national initiative, "Every Diabetic Counts."

"The GMCF class helps (diabetics) learn about how to make smart food choices, which is the foundation of diabetes care. It doesn't matter what medication we use if the patient is eating the wrong food, so the GMCF class is invaluable to us," said Ronald Watts, MD, a physician who practices in Stockbridge.

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 it. The disease 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. Diabetes also affects African-Americans and Hispanics disproportionately. For example, African-Americans are 1.6 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes than Caucasians.

To find the free diabetes education 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 than 20 years GMCF has served as the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) for Georgia through a contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. For more information, please visit [www.gmcf.org](http://www.gmcf.org).

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