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Diabetes Peer Support Program Collaborates with Diabetes Educators to Improve Care

*The American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation Peers for Progress program
establishes collaboration with the American Association of Diabetes Educators*

LEAWOOD, Kan. (March 19, 2008) – The *Peers for Progress* program, a program of the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation, funded by the Eli Lilly and Company Foundation, will collaborate with the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE). The collaboration will focus on building stronger relationships between primary care physicians, patients and diabetes educators. The AADE will support the initiative by providing a network of diabetes educators to teach people with diabetes how to mentor other patients on how to best manage the disease for long-term health outcomes and better quality of life.

The *Peers for Progress* program was established in June 2007 to empower 200,000 patients, or 1 percent of the American population with diabetes, to become “Diabetes Mentors.” The program aims to have a global impact with more than two million mentors worldwide by the year 2020. The Diabetes Mentors will help other people with diabetes become an integral part of the health care system by serving as a social resource for physicians and diabetes educators. Some will also contribute to the expansion of self-sustainability of the program by training other patients to become Diabetes Mentors.

“By pooling the knowledge, resources, and experience of physicians, diabetes educators and patients, we can help people living with diabetes learn to better manage the emotional, social and daily self-care demands of the disease,” said Dr. Kevin Peterson, president of the *Peers for Progress* program. “This is an innovative approach that stands to greatly improve the quality of life for people living with diabetes all over the world,” he continued.

“The AADE is proud to be a part of this program,” said Amparo Gonzalez, RN, BSN, CDE, president of the AADE. “With diabetes reaching epidemic proportions in the United States and in the rest of the world, there is a critical need to expand the support network provided to all people with diabetes. Diabetes Mentors will help patients implement the physician’s clinical recommendations and the diabetes educator’s behavior change strategies.”

Currently, *Peers for Progress* is calling for six to eight evaluation grant proposals to enhance the evidence base for peer support in diabetes management. The grants will be awarded with total costs over a 32-month period, and will range from \$500,000 to \$1 million each. Grant applicants will propose their own methods for their projects.

Grantees will work collaboratively with other grantees and *Peers for Progress* leadership to test the overall benefits of peer support as it relates to improved self-management of the disease and improved quality of life and long-term health outcomes. Additional information about the grant application process can be found at peersforprogress.org after April 1, 2008.

Diabetes currently affects more than 246 million people worldwide and is expected to affect 308 million by 2025. Some 3 million people die annually from diabetes-related causes.

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About the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation

The Foundation serves as the philanthropic arm of the American Academy of Family Physicians. Its primary goal is to enhance health care delivered to the American people by developing and providing philanthropic resources for the promotion and support of family medicine. For more information about the AAFP Foundation, visit aafpfoundation.org.

About the American Association of Diabetes Educators

Founded in 1973, the AADE is a multidisciplinary professional membership organization of healthcare professionals dedicated to integrating successful self-management as a key outcome in the care of people with diabetes and related conditions. Its mission is driving professional practice to promote healthy living through self-management of diabetes and related conditions. For more information about the AADE, visit diabeteseducator.org.