

Recognizing High-Quality Diabetes Care in DFW

A DFWBGH Demonstration Project

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diabetes is a growing epidemic that is creating a major health care crisis across the U.S., including in our Lone Star State. Over 3 million Texans (or 13.3% of the state’s population) are estimated to have diabetes. Another 25.5%, or 6.3 million Texans, have pre-diabetes. For the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex (DFW), that translates to 873,700 residents with diabetes and 1,669,800 with pre-diabetes.

DFW employers are keenly interested in collaborating with the health care community on meaningful actions to improve delivery of diabetes care, patient compliance and outcomes. Maintaining a healthy workforce is a business imperative in today’s competitive environment, and one key to achieving this is access to high-quality care. In the absence of transparency in health care quality and price, employers rely on national physician recognition programs, such as the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Diabetes Recognition Program (DRP), for assurance that employers are paying for quality and that employees are able to find physicians who provide high-quality care.



In an effort to increase the pool of DRP-recognized providers of diabetes care in DFW, the Dallas–Fort Worth Business Group on Health (DFWBGH), in partnership with four of the area’s largest independent practice associations (IPAs) and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX), launched a DRP Expansion Demonstration Project in January 2012. The one-year project, sponsored by the National Business Coalition on Health (NBCH) with funding from Sanofi, was completed in December 2012. The goal was to have at least 10% of the estimated 1,300 eligible primary care physicians recognized through the NCQA DRP by the project’s end.

At the conclusion of the project, the number of DRP-recognized physicians in DFW had more than doubled, from 89 to 187 (or 14% of eligible primary care physicians), and more were in the pipeline with DRP applications pending NCQA review. DFWBGH is pleased to provide this report highlighting the collaborative activities of project partners that led to the success of the DRP Expansion Project.

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DRP EXPANSION OPPORTUNITY

DFW is a dynamic health care market characterized by innovation and collaboration in addressing regional health priorities and achieving the best *value* in health care. Local health care leaders are working together on projects to measure and increase the transparency of health care quality and price, and to move the market toward performance-based rewards and patient-centered medical homes.

Keys to project success

- Multi-stakeholder collaboration
- Physician/IPA leadership input
- Support of IPA-sponsored initiatives

The DRP Expansion Project capitalized on market trends and leveraged existing programs and relationships to bring about a dramatic increase in the number

of physicians with DRP recognition. DFWBGH engaged BCBSTX in the project, building on efforts to increase the number of DRP-recognized physicians participating in BCBSTX's Bridges to Excellence (BTE) Diabetes Care Program, in which recognized physicians receive financial rewards for delivering high-quality diabetes care.

DFWBGH brought together representatives from several large DFW employers, BCBSTX, six large IPAs and two local medical societies to solicit input and support for the DRP Expansion Project. As a prevalent chronic health condition, diabetes can have significant financial impact on employers. Ensuring that their employees receive high-quality care translates into healthier employees and long-term savings. Employers are willing to reward high-quality care, but need reliable tools to measure quality and guide employees to this type of care. IPA

leaders acknowledge that quality measurement and transparency are necessary to move the market toward optimal care and outcomes and performance-based pay. They view DRP as a way for their physicians to take the lead in measuring and documenting the quality of their diabetes care, positioning IPA members for success as the market evolves toward patient-centered medical homes and performance-based payment and rewards. Four IPAs engaged in the DRP Expansion Project to promote DRP recognition to their physician members.

At the start of DFWBGH's DRP Expansion Project, 89 physicians in DFW had achieved DRP recognition, or about 7% of the estimated 1,300 primary care physicians who provide continuing care to 25 or more adult diabetes patients (the minimum number of patient chart reviews needed to apply for DRP). Although DFW ranked as the largest Texas metropolitan statistical area (MSA) by population, it ranked only sixth by number of DRP-recognized physicians per 100,000 residents—behind not only Houston, but also significantly smaller communities like Tyler.

Metropolitan Area	Population (2010)	Texas Rank*	U.S. Rank*	DRP Physicians (Feb. 2012)	DRP per 100,000
Tyler	209,714	17	202	28	13.352
Waco	234,906	14	188	28	11.920
Beaumont-Port Arthur	388,745	10	132	18	4.630
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown	5,946,800	2	6	126	2.119
Longview	214,369	16	198	3	1.399
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington	6,371,773	1	4	89	1.397

* Based on population and ranking, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.



**Guy L. Culpepper, MD, CEO,
Jefferson Physician Group**

"Primary care physicians do a great job of taking care of patients, but we have not been good at quality measurement. Frankly, there have been few incentives—rather it takes time and money away from delivering care. DFWBGH brought us an incentive that our physicians understand—partnership with employers. Like employers, primary care physicians want healthier patients at lower costs. DFWBGH encouraged participation in DRP by telling physicians that employers see the value of partnership and are willing to share savings, benefiting patients, employers, and primary care physicians. We hope the DFWBGH DRP Expansion Project is just the beginning of new employer and physician partnerships."

Jefferson Physician Group represents 230 independent, board-certified primary care physicians in North Texas.



**Bruce W. Landes, MD,
President and CEO,
Southwest Physician Associates**

"Southwest Physician Associates strongly supports the NCQA's Diabetes Recognition Program as a great way to identify and recognize physicians who are currently providing high-quality diabetic care for their patients. The fact that major health plans in the Metroplex have chosen to supply measurable incentives to physicians who achieve and maintain DRP recognition is a morale booster to physicians who often feel that their efforts to provide excellent care are unnoticed and unrewarded."

Southwest Physician Associates has more than 1,500 independent physician members in 50 specialties, including about 400 primary care physicians.

IPA SUPPORT FOR DRP EXPANSION PROJECT

IPA-sponsored activities informed and encouraged physicians to apply for DRP recognition.

Jefferson Physician Group (JPG)

- Sponsored a diabetes education dinner announcing JPG support for the DFWBGH DRP project.
- Covered the entire cost of DRP application for participating JPG physicians.
- Provided ongoing information and guidance to members throughout the DRP application process.
- Hosted additional diabetes clinical guideline meetings, email updates and personal support.

Southwest Physician Associates (SPA)

- Promoted DRP through email communications and Webinars for interested SPA members.
- Paid for more than half of DRP application fees for SPA members.
- Committed to support DRP recognition beyond the project end date.

Texas Health Physicians Group (THPG) affiliate of Texas Health Resources (THR)

- Aligned internal quarterly quality improvement indicators, reporting and action planning with NCQA's DRP diabetes criteria.
- Delivered live and Web-based continuing medical education (CME) diabetes learning using THPG evidence-based guidelines.
- Presented internal THR physician trophies and President's Quality Circle recognitions.
- Developed a Six Sigma-driven NCQA IT submission process.

Genesis Physicians Group

- Met one-on-one with primary care physicians to inform and encourage DRP recognition.
- Included DRP discussion in WebEx and physician office educational meetings throughout the year.

SUPPORT ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY OTHER PROJECT PARTNERS

DFWBGH

- Arranged NCQA discounted application fee for applicants participating in DFWBGH DRP Expansion Project.

- Developed (with IPA assistance) summary, glossary of acronyms and "Q&A" on DRP and how it relates to the BCBSTX BTE Diabetes Care Program.
- Provided periodic updates on DRP program and information resources.
- Provided contact list for support and resources from NCQA, BCBSTX and Sanofi.
- Shared NCQA slide deck on DRP application process.

Picture of Success		
Measure	Project Start	Project End
Total number of DRP-recognized physicians in DFW	89	187
Percentage of eligible DFW primary care physicians (with ≥25 patients) with DRP recognition	7%	14%
Number of DRP-recognized physicians per 100,000 people in DFW	1.40	2.93
DFW MSA rank among Texas MSAs for number of DRP physicians per 100,000 people	6	4

BCBSTX

- Offered \$500 bonus to physicians who became DRP recognized in 2012.
- Assisted with questions related to DRP recognition.

Sanofi

- Provided physician practices with staff training and patient education assistance.



Catherine Hill, DNP, GNP-BC, Texas Health Physicians Group Chief Nursing Officer/Quality and Clinical Outcomes

"Texas Health Physicians Group made NCQA DRP recognition easy to do by aligning internal quality indicators and action planning with NCQA DRP criteria, engaging physicians in CME and providing evidence-based guidelines, internal recognition and EHR clinical decision support. We are pleased to

have contributed so many new DRP recognitions in DFW."

Texas Health Physicians Group represents 770 physicians (more than 250 primary care) and is associated with Texas Health Resources, a large faith-based, nonprofit health care delivery system.



Dawn Boyd, MPH Director, Contracting and Strategic Physician Initiatives, Genesis Physicians Group

"Genesis recognizes the value of the NCQA DRP physician recognition program because it parallels our company-wide initiative to improve the overall quality of health care for our patients. We have the opportunity to redesign health care in today's market. Employers are looking for performance

improvement relative to quality measurements and cost around chronic disease conditions. We encourage our physicians to take this important first step toward becoming patient-centered medical homes."

Genesis Physicians Group members include 440 primary care physicians.



CALL TO ACTION

Employers

- Motivate employees to use DRP-recognized physicians via enhanced communication, incentives and benefit design changes.
- Support performance-based provider reward systems.

Health Plans

- Recognize physician achievement of DRP recognition in Provider Directories.
- Reward DRP-recognized physicians through reduced administrative burden and/or performance-based financial rewards.

Physicians

- Embrace quality measurement, evidence-based practices and DRP recognition.

ABOUT THE DIABETES RECOGNITION PROGRAM (DRP)

The NCQA and the American Diabetes Association created the DRP to provide physicians and other clinicians with resources supporting the delivery of consistent, high-quality diabetes care. The DRP uses 10 standard industry-recognized diabetes care measures for a 25-patient sample.

DRP

- Promotes and recognizes high-quality care through adherence to nationally recognized standards of high-quality evidence-based diabetes care.
- Brings transparency and public recognition of quality through NCQA's Recognition Directory and Health Plan Provider Directories.
- Positions physicians to benefit financially through performance-based rewards.

For more information about NCQA and DRP, visit www.ncqa.org.



DFWBGH is a coalition of 135 Dallas and Fort Worth area employers and health-related organizations committed to promoting and maintaining a health care delivery system that provides quality, accountability and affordability for our employees. With an average workforce of 3,000 employees, DFWBGH employers represent over 250,000 DFW-based employees and spend over \$2.5 billion per year in DFW on employee health care. To learn more about DFWBGH and our initiatives, visit www.dfwbgh.org.

DFWBGH congratulates all those physicians who achieved DRP recognition in 2012 and thanks them for the excellent diabetes care they provide to our community. We also thank the participating IPAs, BCBSTX and Sanofi for their partnership in promoting DRP recognition to DFW physicians.

For questions about the DFWBGH DRP Expansion Project, please contact Karen Wiese, DFWBGH Project Manager, at 214-382-3037.

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Marianne Fazen, PhD, Executive Director, Dallas-Fort Worth Business Group on Health

"DRP acknowledges physicians who meet national standards for quality care, encourages use of best practices to manage diabetes, and helps give employers the assurance they need that their limited health care budgets are spent on care that achieves optimal outcomes. DRP recognition positions physicians to be lead players in the

evolving pay-for-performance market environment and, in the absence of market transparency, gives employees and other consumers a credible way to identify quality providers of diabetes care."



Eduardo Sanchez, MD, Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

"Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas is pleased to partner with DFWBGH and the IPAs to promote expansion of DRP in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The prevalence of diabetes is growing in Texas and warrants all the attention it can get. That's why we've been collaborating with Bridges to

Excellence, which focuses on quality diabetes care, and we will continue to focus on participation in efforts that reward physicians for quality care, thus reducing the cost of care."

For more information about BCBSTX's BTE Diabetes Care Program, visit http://www.bcbstx.com/provider/training/bridges_excellence.html