

Managing Diabetes: Know Your ABCs

(NAPSA)—A simple test might help many of the millions of Americans with diabetes better manage their condition.

Called the A1C test, it provides doctors with an accurate assessment of a patient's glucose levels over the three most recent months. The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) and the National Medical Association (NMA) recommend that diabetic patients receive an A1C test at least twice a year.

About 23.6 million people in the U.S. are diabetic, and studies show that new cases of the disease soared by about 90 percent in the United States in the past decade. Of those who have diabetes, 3.7 million are African American. In fact, 14.7 percent of all non-Hispanic blacks aged 20 years or older have diabetes.

To help, the National Diabetes Education Program has produced a very useful document entitled "4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life." This free publication provides helpful tips for all diabetics that provide details on how one can manage diabetes in between doctor's visits, such as:

- Know your ABCs (A1C, Blood Pressure and Cholesterol). The current normal range for an A1C test is 6 percent. Results greater than 7 percent are an indication of poor glucose management.

- Ask your doctor for a diabetes meal plan. A healthy diet is a vital part of managing diabetes.

- Reduce stress and exercise 30-60 minutes each day.

- Take your medicines as prescribed, even if you feel good.

To get a free copy of "4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes for Life," call (800) 438-5383 or visit www.ndep.nih.gov. To learn more about the National Medical Association and the National Diabetes Education Program, visit www.NMA diabetesnet.org.