



ATandT, HHS, AADE Collaborate on Mobile Diabetes Management

AT&T is donating funds and smartphones for a project with HHS and AADE to help an underserved community in Dallas manage and prevent diabetes.

By Brian T. Horowitz
September 14, 2011

AT&T is partnering with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Minority Health and the [American Association of Diabetes Educators \(AADE\)](#) to develop a project for an underserved minority community in Dallas to allow them to become more educated on diabetes self-management using live video [communication](#) on mobile devices over AT&T's network.

The AADE is an association of health care providers that accredits programs to provide diabetes health management education.

For the Dallas community, the AADE will provide diabetes self-management training (DSMT) through live video communication on [mobile](#) devices to 150 patients. DSMT is a process that enables people with or at risk for diabetes to gain the knowledge they need to maintain healthy behavior and monitor the condition.

"Our goal is to really evaluate the use of mobile devices in terms of delivering diabetes self-management training," Dr. Garth N. Graham, deputy assistant secretary for minority health at HHS, told eWEEK.

HHS brought AT&T and AADE together for the project and works to foster [collaboration](#) on these types of health care IT initiatives. "There's a lot of work in this general area that HHS is doing to bring together partners," Dr. Garth N. Graham, deputy assistant secretary for minority health at HHS, told eWEEK. "Our role will be kind of accelerating and pulling together the partnership and keeping folks together."

Social and environmental factors, as well as less access to care, could contribute to increased cases of diabetes in underserved minority communities, Graham said. "It is very much multifactorial in terms of why many of these communities have higher instances of this disease," he said. "There are a lot of social and environmental potential contributors, such as diet and exercise."

To fund the study, AT&T will donate \$100,000 to the AADE and provide 150 smartphones with voice and data plans to patients, diabetes educators and additional education personnel.

The AADE is recruiting participants from the Diabetes Health and Wellness Institute, an affiliate of the Baylor Health Care System and Baylor University Medical Center, in Dallas. The study will last about eight months, according to Xavier Williams, vice president for public sector and health care at AT&T, told eWEEK.

Through the project, announced on Sept. 12, the AADE will be able to test whether the live video chat on smartphones can bring positive behavior changes as far as diabetes care and prevention compared with face-to-face interactions, according to Lana Vukovljak, the organization's CEO.

Live video communication on mobile phones using services such as Skype can help give patients the direction they need to bring positive outcomes, Vukovljak told eWEEK. Because patients don't schedule

office visits, they may feel more comfortable with the live mobile communication, she said. Specific smartphone models and applications to be used are to be determined, Vukovljak added.

With the support educators will provide using mobile devices, researchers will evaluate whether patients were able to improve their blood glucose levels, blood pressure and body mass index.

"We want to show whether these tools in these communities actually reduce the incidents and prevalence of complications," Graham said. "We just want to raise awareness around not just the challenges that these communities face but the potential benefit of these types of applications."

Educators also hope to reduce hospitalizations by using mobile technology to help people learn how to manage and prevent diabetes, Vukovljak noted.

Upon the study's completion, the AADE will release a report on how mobile health can help manage diabetes.

In addition to work with AADE on the project in Dallas, [AT&T is collaborating with health insurance provider HCSC](#) to test WellDoc's mobile DiabetesManager application to see if it can bring patients greater control over their blood glucose levels.