

# Leading health organizations collaborate with industry on new initiative to combat growing diabetes

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The American Heart Association (AHA) and the American Diabetes Association (ADA) today announced the start of a new multi-year collaborative initiative supported by founding sponsors Boehringer Ingelheim, Eli Lilly and Company (Lilly), and Novo Nordisk. The initiative's goal is to help people with type 2 diabetes reduce their risk of disability and death due to cardiovascular events such as heart attack and stroke. Additional support for the initiative is provided by national sponsor Sanofi.

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and a major cause of disability for this population.

Adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have [cardiovascular disease](#), which includes heart disease, heart failure, heart attack and stroke, than people without diabetes. The combined risks have a significant impact—shortening life expectancy by an average of 12 years for adults at age 60 with both conditions.

Type 2 diabetes, which accounts for 90-95 percent of all diabetes cases, occurs when blood glucose (sugar) levels rise higher than normal because the body doesn't respond to the hormone insulin properly. It is estimated that more than 30 million American adults have diabetes, including about 7.2 million who are undiagnosed.

In people with type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular risk remains high even when blood sugar levels are controlled, leaving many unaware of the danger.

The new initiative will enhance consumer awareness, patient education, healthcare provider training, and quality improvement measures for clinics, practices and hospitals treating people with type 2 diabetes.

Together, the AHA and ADA bring strong credentials to this effort, with more than 30 million volunteers, members and healthcare professionals with a combined 170 years of expertise. The AHA is the world's leading voluntary organization working to build lives free of cardiovascular disease and stroke. The ADA is the nation's leading voluntary health organization working to prevent, cure and improve the lives of those affected by diabetes.

"Diabetes is a significant threat to the cardiovascular health of many Americans," said Nancy Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the American Heart Association. "As we work toward our goal to improve Americans' health, this collaboration aims to unite the healthcare community with a comprehensive approach to caring for, educating, treating and empowering patients with diabetes to improve their cardiovascular health and their quality of life."

"Diabetes is the most expensive chronic health condition in the U.S., totaling \$327 billion in overall annual costs in 2017; moreover, one in every seven healthcare dollars is spent directly treating diabetes and its complications," said Tracey D. Brown, Chief Executive Officer of the American Diabetes Association. "Reducing cardiovascular disease risk among people with type 2 diabetes can improve quality and length of life, and it can help to reduce our national healthcare expenses. This collaboration codifies a critical collective mission—to improve and enhance the lives of the more than 30 million Americans with diabetes."

The longer people live with type 2 diabetes, the higher their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and, potentially, additional health concerns and risk factors. These are challenges the AHA, ADA and industry collaborators are ready to combat together.

"This new collaboration has the potential to improve the lives of millions living with diabetes who are at an increased risk for cardiovascular disease and reduce the impact of these conditions on our health care system," said Thomas Seck, M.D., Vice President of Clinical Development and Medical Affairs—Primary Care at Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. "Boehringer Ingelheim and our Alliance partner Lilly are proud to launch this important initiative, which is a testament to the critical shifts needed in diabetes care to properly address the life-threatening consequences of diabetes and heart disease."

"As a founding partner of this initiative, we're excited about joining together with the ADA and AHA to launch this initiative to help people with diabetes learn more about the critical link between diabetes and the risk of cardiovascular [disease](#)," said Todd Hobbs, M.D., Vice President and Chief Medical Officer of Novo Nordisk. "Addressing cardiovascular risk is an important part of overall diabetes management, and we're hopeful that the collective power of the AHA, ADA and industry will change the trajectory of type 2 diabetes and bring about meaningful change for the people living with [diabetes](#) and those who love, support and care for them."

Provided by American Heart Association

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