DIABETES — OVERVIEW

Diabetes is a group of diseases marked by high levels of blood glucose resulting from defects in insulin production, insulin action, or both. Diabetes can lead to serious complications and premature death. Having diabetes is serious and can be a lifelong condition (CDC 2005).

The three main types of diabetes are:

**Type 1 diabetes** – A serious, lifelong condition accounting for 5% to 10% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes most often occurs during childhood or adolescence, but can appear at any age. Those who have type 1 diabetes must take insulin daily to live, and there is no known way to prevent it.

**Type 2 diabetes** – Also known as adult-onset diabetes, type 2 diabetes accounts for 90% to 95% of all diagnosed cases of diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is associated with older age, obesity, family history of diabetes, history of gestational diabetes, impaired glucose metabolism, physical inactivity, and race/ethnicity. African Americans, Latinos, American Indians, and some Asians and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders are at higher risk for type 2 diabetes and its complications (CDC 2005).

A serious consequence of the obesity epidemic is the increase in type 2 diabetes among children ages 6 to 11 years and adolescents ages 12 to 19 years. Although there has been no definitive large-scale reporting of incidence within these age groups, a recent epidemiological review suggested that as many as 8-45% of new-onset pediatric diabetes cases in the U.S. may be type 2 (Copeland 2005).

**Gestational diabetes** – Occurring during pregnancy, gestational diabetes is a form of glucose intolerance requiring treatment to normalize the mother’s blood glucose levels to avoid complications in the infant. After pregnancy, 5 to 10% of women with gestational diabetes develop type 2 diabetes. Women who have had gestational diabetes have a 20 to 50% chance of developing diabetes in the next five to 10 years. Gestational diabetes occurs more frequently among African Americans, Hispanic/Latino Americans, and American Indians. It is also more common among obese women and women with a family history of diabetes (CDC 2005).
Who is most impacted

Those with the highest rates of diabetes-related mortality include:

- Males
- Persons ages 65 and over

Those with the highest rates of diabetes-related hospitalizations include:

- Males
- African Americans
- Persons under ages 65 and over