

BETTER TOGETHER: Partnered Approach to Elevating Engagement in the National Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Change Program

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BACKGROUND

The **National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) lifestyle change program (LCP)** is a

structured, evidence-based, year-long program designed to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes in people with prediabetes or those at risk of developing the condition.

Although the National DPP LCP addresses some family dynamics, there are more opportunities to engage family members or close friends throughout the program.

Extending outreach and education to family/friends of a person at risk for type 2 diabetes can maximize the opportunity for participants to make more significant and lasting lifestyle changes.

The study team explored the acceptability, engagement, and outcomes of jointly enrolling a family member, spouse, or friend in National DPP LCPs.



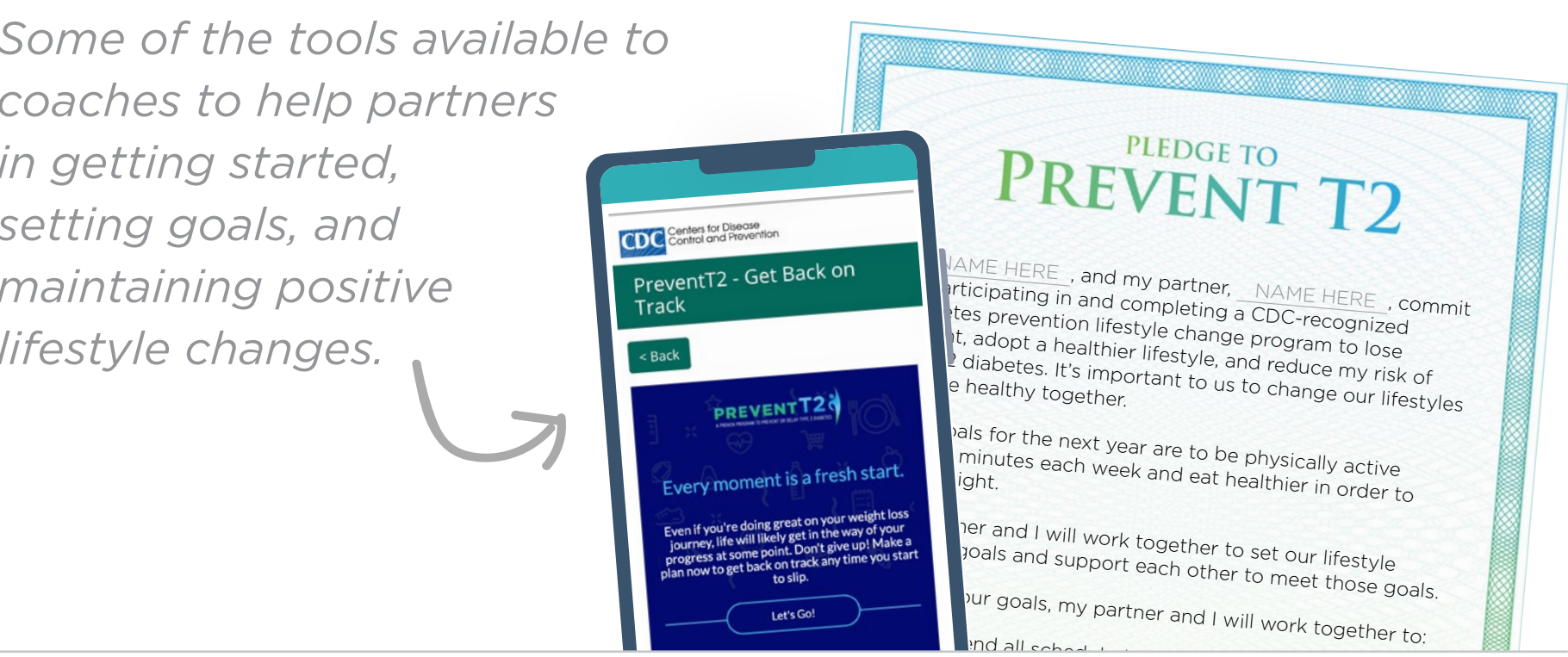
QUESTIONS

The general evaluation questions for this study are:

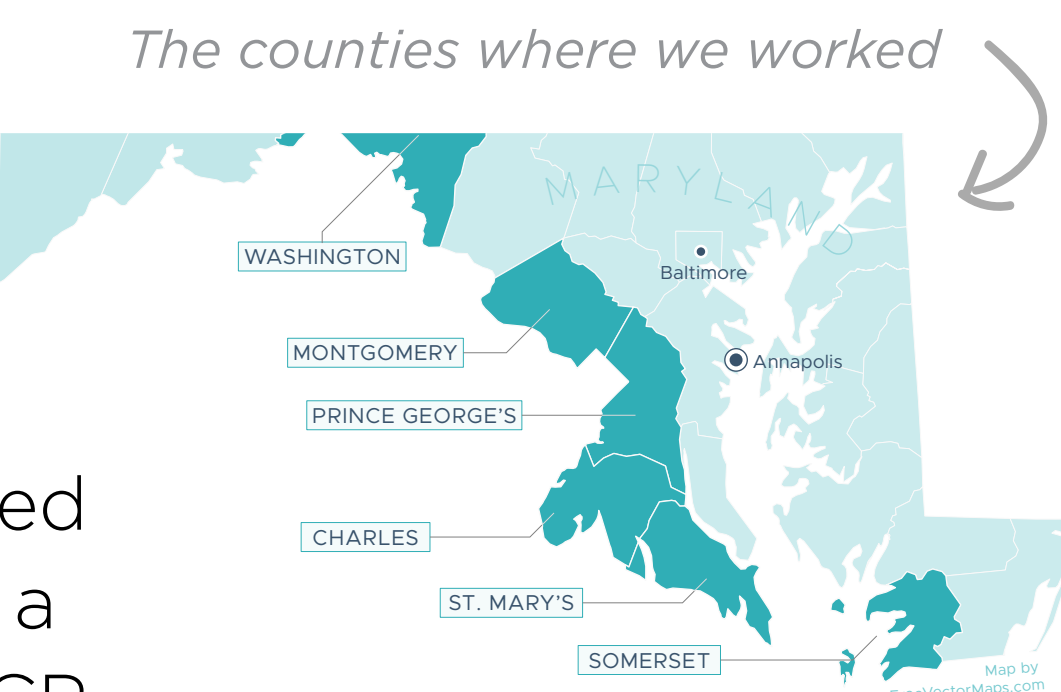
- a. Which outreach/recruitment strategies and messages encourage family/friend partners to enroll in the National DPP LCP?
- b. How do tailored activities and messages developed to complement existing modules in the PreventT2 curriculum affect engagement and retention of family/friend partners in the National DPP LCP?

METHODS

- We developed tools for recruitment and implementation of the family/friend partner-specific LCP.



- We worked with **six National DPP provider organizations** in Maryland (urban/suburban, small city, rural).
 - Organizations recruited/enrolled partners to join a National DPP LCP
 - One partner had to be eligible to join National DPP LCP; both partners could be eligible, and most partners were eligibility concordant



- Evaluation data collection:**
 - 3- and 9-month surveys with participants** (both those at risk for type 2 diabetes and those who are not at risk)
 - 6- and 12-month focus groups with participants at risk** for type 2 diabetes
 - 3-, 6-, 9- and 12-month in-depth interviews with Lifestyle Coaches**

RESULTS

- The delivery modalities of the LCPs consisted of distance learning (four sites), online (one site), and in-person (one site).
- Sixty-eight individuals in 34 pairs enrolled in six programs; 56 were eligible under National DPP LCP requirements.
- 72% of all participants and 79% of those at risk were retained across the 12-month LCPs. 20 of 34 pairs

were retained across the 12-month period (59%). Some literature has shown a regular program retention rate of 32%; Lifestyle Coaches in the study programs estimated regular retention around 40%.

- 40 people in pairs and 6 people who were no longer in a pair completed the LCP. 77% of people at risk who completed the LCP were in a pair at the end.

EXPERIENCES

Lifestyle Coaches described their experiences with the partnered lifestyle change program as positive:

- All (n=8) of the Lifestyle Coaches provided positive feedback about the family/friend partner-specific approach. The Lifestyle Coaches expressed that they would conduct family/friend partner-specific LCPs again in the future.
- Several Lifestyle Coaches would like to facilitate at least one family/friend partner-specific LCP a year while two coaches would like to facilitate only family/friend partner-specific LCPs in the future (if that were permitted).
- Lifestyle Coaches described participants as more engaged and participatory in comparison to LCPs where participants joined without family/friend partners. Lifestyle coaches shared that there was less attrition and observed that participants seemed better able to stick to their goals because of the support from their partner.
- Lifestyle Coaches expressed that the materials/tools developed supported their recruitment and implementation efforts.



ANDREA, 48,
Lifestyle Coach for 8 years

I felt like with the additional support, they were able to reach their goals—and also sustain them. A lot of people I feel like can reach their goals, but then they leave their program, and they don't always continue with the support group. I feel like because their partner was in this with them, they were able to continue working on those goals and stick with their lifestyle changes.

I, one hundred percent, would like to have the Partner Up program available. In between classes and especially when we spread out to monthly sessions and then when the program is over, I feel like they have more support and more chances for success when they have someone else in this with them.

BILL AND LINDA
79 and 69, Participants



Is there anything you would say to someone who is trying to decide between doing the program by themselves versus doing it with a partner?

Bill: *You are better off with a partner because you support each other, and you can talk to each other about anything that went on in the meetings and what you can both do to makes things better for each of you.*

Linda: *I think you have a better chance at success with a partner. If Bill is my partner in this, I feel like he generally cares about my health, instead of me fighting this thing on my own. I'm not in it alone.*

CONCLUSIONS

- LCPs could explore periodically offering family/friend partnered LCPs.
- When using the family/friend partner-specific approach, it is important for LCPs to screen and offer guidance on pairings that will be most successful in order to help people to pick supportive partners.
- The family/friend partner-specific approach may bring more people at risk for developing type 2 diabetes to the National DPP LCP because they can include friends and family who are willing to join with them, which ultimately might lead to a reduction in the incidence rates of type 2 diabetes.

Participants' experiences with partnered LCPs were also positive:

- Some participants joined this LCP because they could/had to join with a family/friend partner, rather than doing a LCP as an individual. Participants mentioned that working together as well as working with the group and the Lifestyle Coach set up a good dynamic for lifestyle change.
- Family/friend partners found ways to work together to eat healthier meals and participate in physical activity. They felt accountable to their partner and discussed helping each other get through moments of weakness or resistance.
- There were some family/friend partnerships that did not work as expected with one participant dropping out or the partner being seen as less supportive than desired. In a small number of cases, participants expressed that they wished they had chosen a different partner.
- Participants were enthusiastic about the program — with some participants referring others to it. Many participants said they would help recruit and come to classes to offer their insights.



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