Saint Anthony Hospital Success Story

2026

Background

Saint Anthony Hospital (SAH) Center for Diabetes and Nutrition Education provides Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) services throughout the year. Patients are referred by Saint Anthony Hospital providers as well as by community partners who recommend patients who would benefit from DSMES.

SAH's service area has alarmingly high rates of chronic illness: more than 75% of the residents surveyed as part of our most recent Community Health Needs Assessment had one or multiple chronic conditions and nearly 40% had diabetes or prediabetes.

SAH is located between the North Lawndale and South Lawndale communities of Chicago. South Lawndale has the second highest adult diabetes rate in Chicago, and North Lawndale's diabetes rate is 3x higher than that of the community directly adjacent to it. SAH's Center for Diabetes and Nutrition Education DSMES services are critical to improving health outcomes and quality of life for people with diabetes living in these communities.

Approach

SAH conducts community and provider outreach to increase awareness and utilization of DSMES services. For example, the program held a diabetes workshop in March 2026 at the hospital, where DSMES services were promoted to 40 workshop participants. SAH also has a community outreach coordinator who promotes DSMES services at community clinics, events, and health fairs.

To support patients in accessing DSMES services, the program provides Ventra cards for patients who have difficulty accessing transportation to appointments and interpreter services, if needed. All program materials are offered in both Spanish and English.

Support

The CDC DSMES Toolkit has supported SAH's efforts to promote and expand its DSMES program. SAH has utilized DSMES Toolkit resources, including customizable handouts, flyers, and letters for healthcare providers that explain DSMES services and their role in diabetes care. CDC funding has also supported SAH's efforts to expand telehealth services by allowing the program to purchase technology supplies, including a desktop camera, speaker, iPad, and television monitor. These tools support virtual visits and allow staff to incorporate visual education methods, such as educational videos, into diabetes education sessions.

*CARES Cook County is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-funded initiative convened by the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI) in partnership with healthcare and community-based partners across Cook County.



Illinois Public Health Institute

Impact

In 2025, SAH provided DSMES services to 106 patients, up from 91 in 2024, demonstrating meaningful growth. Program efforts to promote and deliver DSMES services continue to show progress, with 40 patients receiving DSMES services during the most recent quarter, putting the program on track to see a significant increase in participants receiving DSMES services in 2026.

Additionally, SAH improved its process for collecting important patient biomarker data by increasing the percentage of patients who begin DSMES services with baseline A1C data on file. In June 2025, as part of its Continued Quality Improvement process, SAH developed a protocol to ensure staff collect A1C data when registering patients for DSMES services. At that time, 56% of patients entered the DSMES program with baseline A1C data. The program's goal is to increase that percentage to 75%, with a long-term goal of 100% of patients having baseline A1C data.

In 2025, the average A1C among all participants was 8.4. Program data show that 10 DSMES participants experienced improvement, with an average post-program A1C of 6.7.

Program Outcome Data

106 patients received DSMES services in 2025

8.4 average A1C among program participants in 2025

6.7 average A1C post-program among participants in 2026

Next Steps

Starting in June 2026, SAH anticipates being able to bill Medicaid for DSMES services, which will support the long-term sustainability and expansion of the program. SAH is also developing its capacity to provide DSMES counseling through telehealth, creating additional opportunities for patients to access services and participate in follow-up appointments. Expanding telehealth options will support continued engagement in DSMES programming and help patients receive ongoing education and support to manage their health.

Additionally, SAH continues outreach efforts with internal providers, community partners, and community members to increase awareness of DSMES services, strengthen referral pathways, and support program utilization.