

DSMES SERVICES AT-A-GLANCE

A quick reference about diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services that can improve health outcomes for your patients



Consider referring your patients to diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services that are highly effective in improving the health and diabetes management skills of people with diabetes in ways that fit their lifestyle.

- Studies have shown that DSMES services can lead to **decreases in A1C levels, prevention or delay of diabetes complications, and improved quality of life.**
- The American Diabetes Association (ADA) and the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES) accredit or recognize diabetes programs providing DSMES services that **meet required national standards.**
- **Insurance coverage** of DSMES services varies, but many private and state Medicaid plans cover it, as well as Medicare. Consider referring your patients to DSMES services.
- Research shows that **patients count on their health care provider more than any other source of information** to help them manage a serious chronic condition like diabetes.

What are DSMES Services?

Patients can receive DSMES services one-to-one or in a group, and in person or online, where they:

- Work with a diabetes care and education specialist (DCES), also known as a diabetes educator, to set and track goals
- Learn to manage diabetes using knowledge, skills, and tools
- Build confidence and emotional strength
- Practice how to fit diabetes care into all their daily routines
- Find ways to get support (in person and online) from their:
 - ▶ Family
 - ▶ Friends
 - ▶ Community
 - ▶ Health care team.

Benefits to DSMES Services Referral

For your patients, DSMES services can help:

- ✓ Improve hemoglobin A1C
- ✓ Prevent or delay diabetes complications
- ✓ Increase the likelihood of patients getting preventive health care
- ✓ Reduce acute care and hospitalizations
- ✓ Improve healthy coping, confidence in self-care behaviors, and quality of life.

The benefits to you of referring your patients to DSMES services include:


- ✓ Fewer readmissions
- ✓ Improved quality measures
- ✓ Less time spent on patient education and management.

Requirements for DSMES Services

- A **documented diagnosis** of **type 1**, **type 2**, or **gestational diabetes**, including:
 - ▶ **Fasting blood glucose:**
≥126 mg/dL on two separate occasions
 - ▶ **2-hour post-glucose challenge:**
≥200 mg/dL on two separate occasions
 - ▶ **Random glucose test:**
>200 mg/dL with symptoms of uncontrolled diabetes
- Written **referral** from a treating health care provider

DSMES Services Delivery

- One-to-one or in a group
- In person or online
- In clinical or community settings
- By solo or teams of providers

 **NOTE:** *The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) uses the term diabetes self-management “training” (DSMT) instead of “education and support” (DSMES) when defining the reimbursable benefit (DSMT). The term DSMT relates specifically to Medicare billing.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [NP Guide to Understanding DSMES Services and How to Refer](#)
- [Referral requirements and documentation](#)
- [Sample referral form](#)
- [Journal article on the effect of DSMES services](#)

When to Refer Your Patients

There are four key times to refer:

1. At diagnosis
2. Annually (or when not meeting treatment targets)
3. When complicating factors develop
4. When a transition in life or care happens.

How to Find a Local Program Providing DSMES Services and Refer

1. Online, go to the current program locators:
 - ▶ [ADCES Program Finder](#)
 - ▶ [ADA Program Finder](#)
2. If you find a program in your area, contact them and ask how to refer.
3. If you do NOT find a program in your area, you can:
 - ▶ Reach out to your [state health department](#) or the [National Association of Chronic Disease Directors](#) to find your DSMES State Specialist who may know about programs not included in the program locators yet, or
 - ▶ Contact an online program (in the program locator tools above).
 - ▶ Explore [offering DSMES services](#). You may be able to offer and bill for DSMES services that you can provide to your patients directly.

