



BlueCross BlueShield of Alabama

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Diabetes Growing Fastest Among Alabamians Age 18-34

BIRMINGHAM, AL – According to recent reports from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, in 2016 over 171,000 Blue Cross members living in Alabama have a diagnosis of diabetes, a 24.4% increase (per 10,000 members) from 2014. Over 10,800 of these members are age 18-34 and represent a 28.9% increase.

A new national study by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association (BCBSA) shows the diabetes impact continues to grow and is increasing most rapidly in the 18-34 age group, which is also experiencing the greatest growth in obesity rates, a key contributor to the onset of diabetes. The study also finds that diabetes has the highest health impact on communities in the Southeast and Central South—approximately 50 percent higher than the national average.

Nationally, diabetes ranks third in terms of its health impact on quality of life and cost for the commercially insured population among the more than 200 conditions measured by the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield \(BCBS\) Health Index](#) - ahead of high cholesterol, substance abuse and coronary artery disease. The report, “Diabetes and the Commercially Insured U.S. Population,” represents an analysis of the BCBS Health Index data on diabetes which leverages the claims of more than 40 million BCBS members. For more information, visit <https://www.bcbs.com/the-health-of-america/reports>.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is committed to preventing the continued increase of diabetes in Alabama by increasing access to medical care and promoting healthy choices in communities statewide.

Blue Cross members with diabetes are being assisted through education, awareness and member advocacy programs. These include:

- BlueCare Health Advocates who serve as coaches and advisors.
- Disease management programs for individuals with chronic health conditions, including services tailored directly for managing diabetes.
- Newsletters with condition-specific recipes and health tips.
- Mobile apps.
- Message boards and chat features.
- Electronic care reminders.
- Online trackers and medication planners.
- Educational text and videos about diabetes, diet and nutrition.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is also working with community partners statewide to increase awareness and encourage healthy lifestyles:

- Awarding over \$1 million in 114 Be Healthy School Grants statewide since 2012 to help prevent childhood obesity, benefiting more than 57,500 students.
- Offering free exercise and healthy cooking classes in local parks (e.g., Get Healthy on the Railroad at Birmingham's Railroad Park).
- Encouraging children to run and live healthy through the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama Kids Mercedes Marathon.
- Inspiring employees and students to walk at lunch through Blue Cross' annual National Walk@Lunch Day® and Alabama Walk@School Day events.
- Promoting physical activity through bike share sponsorships in Birmingham and Huntsville.
- Helping fund a variety of charitable organizations which battle diabetes including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, American Diabetes Association and the Southeastern Diabetes Education Services.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama has insured Alabamians for 81 years. Blue Cross offers coverage plans to corporations, individuals and the senior market. For more information about Blue Cross, visit AlabamaBlue.com. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), check out our videos on [YouTube](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#) for more up-to-date information.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield Association

The Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association is a national federation of 36 independent, community-based and locally-operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies that collectively provide healthcare coverage for one-in-three Americans. BCBSA provides health care insights through The Health of America Report series and the national BCBS Health Indexsm. For more information on BCBSA and its member companies, please visit bcbs.com. We also encourage you to connect with us on Facebook, check out our videos on YouTube, follow us on Twitter and check out The BCBS Blog.

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