



[Price Chopper Pharmacists Improve Health Outcomes](#)

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Price Chopper pharmacist Kim Housner counsels a diabetes patient.

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. — Sixty patients who were counseled by Price Chopper pharmacists and dietitians as part of a yearlong study on diabetes care teams experienced an average decrease of 0.6% hemoglobin A1c, according to the retailer.

The measure gauges a patient's blood sugar and indicates how well they are controlling their diabetes.

“When you have diabetes, it’s really confusing to [figure out] how to take medication and what to eat, so our pharmacists and dietitians helped patients navigate those areas, and provided education around meal planning, testing blood sugar and how to use insulin,” explained pharmacist Kim Housner, a clinical coordinator with Price Chopper.

The program was part of the American Pharmacists Association’s Project Impact: Diabetes, and funded, in part, by a grant from the APhA. Pharmacies in communities with access to populations disproportionately affected by diabetes were selected for the study. There were 25 in all.

In addition to Price Chopper Pharmacy here, a supermarket pharmacy located in Ball’s Price Chopper store in Kansas City, Kan., a Kroger store in Cincinnati and a Kroger Co. Dillons store in Wichita, Kan., took part in the study.

More than 2,000 Project Impact patients engaged in one-on-one consultations with pharmacists who monitored their A1c, blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI, and helped them better manage their disease through appropriate medication use, exercise, nutrition and other lifestyle changes.

“What we’ve consistently seen is that when you add a pharmacist to the healthcare delivery team, quality goes up and costs go down,” said Benjamin Bluml, senior vice president of research and innovation for Project Impact: Diabetes.

In the case of pharmacies inside supermarkets and communities with diabetes education centers, dietitians also contributed to Project Impact patient care.

Participants in the Price Chopper (Schenectady) program met with a dietitian three times over the course of the study, either at the nearby Whitney Young Federally Qualified Health Center, Albany, N.Y., or at one of two Price Chopper stores with pharmacies. FQHC are designed to provide primary care to underserved communities and all persons regardless of their ability to pay.

The first meeting involved a store tour, where patients were taught how to use the NuVal nutrition scoring system. "We found this to be really impactful," said pharmacist Alisha Roberts, another clinical coordinator for Price Chopper. Two subsequent visits involved nutrition education and meal planning.

Price Chopper participants also took advantage of the chain's Diabetes AdvantEdge program, which provides free diabetes medication, supplies and a testing monitor.

Project Impact participants were either newly diagnosed or had an HbA1c of 7% or higher, which indicates that their diabetes is not controlled. An HbA1c of 6.5% or higher indicates that a patient has diabetes.

"By the end of the program there were significant improvements in clinical outcomes and pharmacists saw dramatic improvements in the patients' ability to manage their diabetes," said Roberts.

Though Project Impact has ended, Price Chopper pharmacists continue to offer Medication Therapy Management to many Project Impact participants. All are members of CDPHP, which offers private insurance and Medicaid and Medicare plans. MTM is one of the services covered by CDPHP. Many also take advantage of dietitian-lead Medical Nutrition Therapy, which is also covered by the insurer.

Price Chopper has also partnered with CDPHP on health stations that provide free blood pressure, weight, heart rate, blood oxygen and temperature readings. They are located at Price Chopper's six pharmacies in upstate New York. Patients can create a Personal Health Assessment that can be printed at the station.

"The Affordable Care Act emphasizes the need for preventive and efficient health care," said Kathy Bryant, Price Chopper's vice president of pharmacy, in a statement. "The collaboration among our pharmacists, dietitians, CDPHP and innovative technology offered at the Health Stations offers an opportunity for better patient health care outcomes."

Earlier this year, CDPHP teamed with Hannaford on an onsite Healthy Living Center in partnership with the Capital Region YMCA. The center includes a private office space where representatives from the insurer answer questions regarding health insurance and what changes under the Affordable Care Act will mean for individuals.