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North Suburban YMCA Launches Diabetes Prevention Program

Northbrook, IL: March 2018 -- Tuesday, March 27, is American Diabetes Association (ADA) Alert Day®, and the North Suburban YMCA wants residents of Northbrook and the surrounding communities to know their risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, as well as preventive steps they can take today to reduce their risk. A new Y Diabetes Prevention Program, one of the NSYMCA's 50th Anniversary initiatives, will combine education and fitness strategies to battle this devastating disease.

In the United States alone, diabetes affects over 30 million people; another 84 million Americans have prediabetes, yet only about 10 percent are aware of it. These statistics are alarming, and the impact on the cost of health care (in 2012 alone, the ADA estimates that diabetes cost the health care system \$245 billion) makes preventing the number of new cases of type 2 diabetes more important than ever before.

The nation's struggle with obesity and type 2 diabetes is no surprise, but the number of people with prediabetes is a growing issue, especially when so few people realize they have the condition. Prediabetes is a condition in which individuals have blood glucose levels that are higher than normal, but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. Often preventable, people with prediabetes can reduce their risk for developing type 2 diabetes by adopting behavior changes that include eating healthier and increasing physical activity. People with prediabetes are at risk for not only developing type 2 diabetes, but also cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other conditions.

To combat this epidemic on a local level, the North Suburban YMCA will launch its new Diabetes Prevention Program. The Y has taken a National YUSA program and partnered with another local Y to help our community prevent diabetes. This educational program, designed for adults who are at risk or have been diagnosed with prediabetes, encourages healthier eating and physical activity in a small group, supportive environment. Already in use at Y's across the country, the CDC-approved program has been shown to help participants achieve significant weight loss and increase in activity. The program runs for one year and is often covered by insurance.

As the leading community-based network committed to improving the nation's health, the YMCA encourages all adults to take a diabetes risk test at www.ymca.net/diabetes. Several factors that could put a person at risk for type 2 diabetes include family history, age, weight, and activity level, among others.

"ADA Alert Day can serve as a wake-up call for people to learn their risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes—conditions that are preventable if they take steps to improve their health," said Megan Vazquez, North Suburban YMCA Senior Director of Wellness. "Many people don't realize they are at risk, and finding out is not only good for your health, but good for your wallet too."

Some basic lifestyle changes that contribute to weight loss and an increased focus on healthy living can decrease the risk for type 2 diabetes. Among these are:

- Reduce portion sizes of the foods you eat that may be high in fat or calories.
- Keep a food diary to increase awareness of eating patterns and behaviors.
- Be moderately active at least 30 minutes per day five days a week.
- Choose water to drink instead of beverages with added sugar.
- Incorporate more activity in your day, like taking the stairs or parking farther away from your destination.
- Speak to your doctor about diabetes risk factors, especially if you have a family history of the disease or are overweight.

To learn more about the North Suburban YMCA's wide variety of wellness programs, visit NSYMCA.org or contact Megan Vazquez, mvazquez@nsymca.org.

About the North Suburban YMCA

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2018/19, the North Suburban YMCA provides individuals in Northbrook and 15 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help them become healthier, more connected, and confident, regardless of age, income, or background. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.



Photo Caption: The North Suburban YMCA offers nutrition and fitness education to reduce the risk of diabetes.