

PRESS RELEASE

April 2, 2013

Evet Hartvig, Wisconsin Lions Foundation, Inc.

715-677-4969 or ehartvig@wlf.info

Lions Promote Diabetes Awareness

By Lion Jerry Gibbons

“We Serve by reaching, touching, and improving lives of people with diabetes, and promoting awareness to people at risk.” This is the mission statement of the Wisconsin Lions Diabetes Awareness Committee. Lions promote awareness about the serious ramifications of diabetes and spread the word about what can be done to control this disease. Diabetes, also called diabetes mellitus, is a disease in which blood glucose, or sugar, levels are too high. Glucose comes from the foods we eat. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose get into our cells to give them energy. With Type 1 diabetes the body does not make insulin; with Type 2, the more common type, the body does not make or use insulin well.

As many as 366 million people have diabetes worldwide and that number is predicted to rise to 552 million by 2030. Most diabetics have Type 2, with many not aware they have the disease. In the United States, almost 26 million people have diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA). This is more than 8.3% of the U.S. population.

Diabetes leads to several types of eye complications and is a major cause of blindness in the U.S. The major problem is diabetic retinopathy, a complication that occurs when diabetes damages the tiny blood vessels that nourish the retina. The condition is progressive and usually affects both eyes. All diabetics are at risk. According to the National Eye Institute, 40 - 45% of Americans diagnosed with diabetes have some state of diabetic retinopathy, which has no warning signs until there is a loss of vision.

To address serious health issues, the Wisconsin Lions Diabetes Focus Group has created and is distributing four DVDs. The DVDs are free and are: 1) “Protect Your Vision: The Dilated Eye Exam”; 2) “Diabetic Retinopathy-A Potential Consequence of Uncontrolled Diabetes”; 3) The Links to Chronic Kidney Disease: Diabetes, High Blood Pressure & Family History; and 4) “Type 1 Diabetes: Caring With Confidence.”

In addition to the DVDs, Lions distribute diabetes literature during Diabetes Alert Day in March; recruit nurses, doctors and volunteers for the Wisconsin Lions ADA Diabetes Camp; promote Diabetes Awareness in November with their door hanger project. Lions set up diabetes educational displays at club projects and district conventions, as well as at the state and international conventions. They also help sponsor “Strides...Lions Walk for Diabetes.”

Wisconsin Lions donate generously to the Wisconsin Lions Diabetes Camp. The camp provides a wonderful opportunity for diabetic children ages 9 - 15. Here they can mingle with others that live with this currently incurable disease.