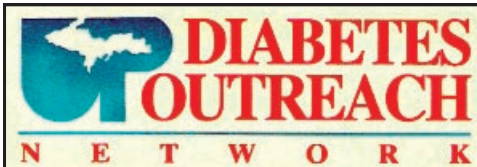




NATIONAL

Diabetes

MONTH



www.diabetesinmichigan.org

American Diabetes Association
www.diabetes.org

Persistence pays!

Samantha Dowson is 25 years old, a college student and a pioneer! A criminal justice major at Lake Superior State University, Samantha has had diabetes since she was six years old and has been using an insulin pump for the last five years. As a typical college student, Samantha was covered by her parent's insurance; covered until the day she turned 25, that is. Students with diabetes who do not have insurance coverage through their parents can receive coverage through age 21 under a State of Michigan health plan.

Six months before her 25th birthday, Samantha began contacting insurance companies to learn what coverage would be available to her once she was terminated from her father's insurance coverage. Many times Samantha found that she was turned away simply because the insurance companies considered diabetes to be a pre-existing condition. Other agencies told her to contact them once she was closer to the termination date but Samantha did not want to wait. She knew the risk of being denied coverage was too high to wait. Any amount of time she would have without coverage would be too much. Samantha wanted a plan of action in place before her birthday.

Frustrated but not giving up, Samantha also made inquiries around her college campus and at various health agencies. She wanted to know if any assistance programs existed that would be available to her while she was still in school. Finally, after a long chain of calling various agencies and getting number after telephone number, she was put in touch with Ann Constance Director of the U.P. Diabetes Outreach Network (UPDON).

Through Ann, Samantha learned that UPDON was in the process of implementing a program specifically for college students in need of diabetes supplies and education. Ann connected Samantha with Teresa Jensen the Diabetes Coordinator at War Memorial Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie. Working with UPDON, Teresa and War Memorial Hospital, Samantha became the first U.P. college student to benefit from this newly formed program.

The U.P. College program, although created by UPDON, only works through the collaborative effort of many. Companies with diabetes-related products have agreed to donate glucose testing supplies and insulin to students in need. Generous private donors are helping to fund the cost of insulin pump supplies as no long-term assistance programs currently exist for insulin pump users. Their generosity also pays for the student's first visit with their diabetes educator. Healthcare systems are donating additional visits with the diabetes educator.

Through UPDON's U.P. College Program, Samantha is able to receive free insulin, free testing strips and a discounted rate on her insulin pump supplies. Monthly costs for diabetes supplies, especially for insulin pump users can easily run between \$500 and \$700. This cost does not include any regular exams or visits with a diabetes educator or doctor.

Cost savings is not the only benefit Samantha has received from the U.P. College Program. Previous to her enrollment in the program, Samantha was not regularly meeting with a diabetes educator for help in learning how to better manage her diabetes. Her parent's insurance did not provide coverage for this type of care. Since meeting with Teresa, Samantha has learned a number of things including how to make insulin adjustments, carb counting and where to find carbohydrate information for her favorite restaurants.

As a result of learning self-management skills from Teresa, Samantha has seen her A1c (a measure of average blood sugar levels over 3 months) drop from 9% to 7.5%. That may not seem like a big drop but research shows that even a 1% drop in A1c results in a 40% reduction in risk for developing diabetes complications. For a person living with diabetes, that is an encouraging thing to hear.

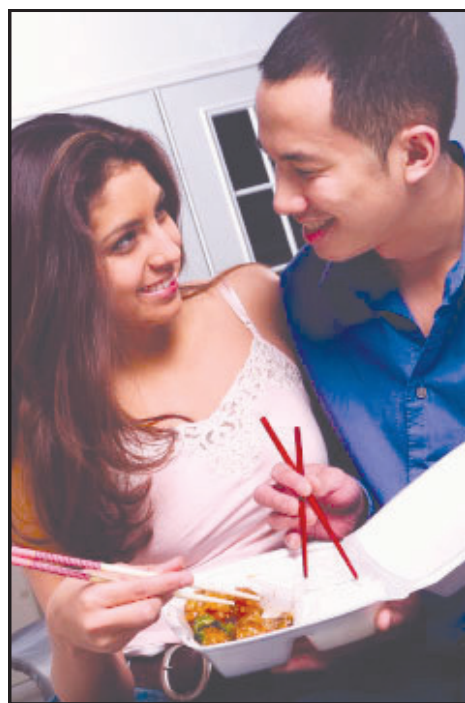
Samantha readily admits that she would not have been able to finish college if not for the U.P. College Program. Simply to afford her supplies Samantha knows she would have had to work full-time leaving little time for school and studies. Dropping out of college was not an option Samantha wanted to consider. Being the first recipient of the program, Samantha was able to carry 15 credits hours and work 15 hours each week. She's happy to report that she will graduate in December!

Samantha believes that there are a lot of students who fall in that in-between category of being covered by their parent's insurance and not having coverage until they complete their college education. She feels this is especially true for students going on for advanced degrees. Samantha knows she is fortunate and says, "I appreciated all the help with getting the supplies for my pump and for testing. It definitely helped financially. I could concentrate on school and not have to worry about getting diabetes supplies." Full-time college students with diabetes in the U.P. who have lost their healthcare coverage and are struggling to pay for needed diabetes supplies can contact the U.P. Diabetes Outreach Network at 1-800-369-9522 from anywhere in the Upper Peninsula for more details about the program.



Got Diabetes? Get Educated!

Diabetes is a serious, costly and disabling condition. . . if not controlled. When a person has diabetes it is best to get advice from a doctor, diabetes educator and a registered dietitian. Research shows that people who regularly see a diabetes educator and a registered dietitian manage their diabetes better. Better management means fewer complications!



According to Christopher Saudek, MD, Past President of the American Diabetes Association, "No diabetes management tool – no oral agent, insulin or medical advice – is as important as the services of a certified diabetes educator." And from an article published in Diabetes Care in 2002, Susan Norris states, "Patients who spend more time with diabetes educators have better eating habits, self-management skills, and glycemic control."

Medical nutrition therapy provided by a registered dietitian and diabetes education are both Medicare benefits for seniors with diabetes. Medicaid and many health plans also cover these services. If you don't have insurance coverage, explore using pre-tax dollars through health savings accounts or check with your local healthcare system about the availability of sliding scale fees and scholarship dollars.



This is the fourth and final installment in a 4-part weekly series about Diabetes, brought to you by The Mining Journal and these sponsors. For all your diabetic needs, see these businesses:

RX Footwear Specialist
Sharon Tabor
Certified Pedorthist

Kendall P. Tabor
D.P.M., F.A.C.F.S.

1414 W. Fair Ave, Suite 50
Marquette
906/225-7709
Fax 906/225-7707
1-800-423-3668

"Special Interest in Diabetic Foot Wear."

WRIGHT & FILIPPIS

FOR YOUR DIABETIC NEEDS

1175 W. Washington
Marquette, MI 49855
(906) 228-6930
www.FirstToServe.com

Call our Diabetic Hotline
(800) 343-4944

Marquette General Diabetes Education Program

- Nutrition education
- Insulin pattern management
- Insulin pump training
- Gestational diabetes education
- Group & individual sessions
- Continuous glucose monitoring service & analysis
- Satellite clinics
- State of Michigan certified education program
- ADA Certified Program

MARQUETTE GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEM
906-225-3473
1-800-562-9753 ext. 3473

Keep UP With Your Diabetes.

Upper Peninsula Health Plan

www.uphp.com

UPPER PENINSULA ORTHOTICS & PROSTHETICS
580 W. College Ave. • Marquette, MI

- Orthotic devices
- Prosthetics
- Diabetic footwear
- Wound care

Call 225-4718

MARQUETTE GENERAL HOSPITAL
UPPER MICHIGAN'S REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Questions about Diabetes? Call Bell Diabetes Educator Marli Carlson 906-475-4605

Bell Hospital
Superior Healthcare System

901 Lakeshore Dr.
Ishpeming

Superior Eye Health & Vision Therapy Center
HEIDI JOHNSON, OD, FCOVD

Annual exams are crucial for diabetics! We co-manage diabetes with your primary care physician.

Heidi Johnson, OD, FCOVD
2822 Venture Dr.
228-4401
(Corner of Venture & Commerce, behind Westwood Mall)
www.superioreye.com

Curves

Introducing CurvesSmart™

A workout that keeps you motivated like never before to get the results you want.

OVER 10,000 LOCATIONS WORLDWIDE

910-850-8863
910 US Hwy #1
Shelburne, VT 05482

906-228-2878
1000 W. Washington
Marquette, MI 49855

JOIN NOW & GET JANUARY ON US!

910 US 41, Ishpeming • 906.486.8863
1500 W. Washington St., Marquette 906.228.2878