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For Immediate Release

Saving Limbs & Saving Lives: Local Coalition Recognizes Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy Alert Day on June 20th

DCAC launches “Don’t Let Diabetes Knock You Off Your Feet” Campaign

Atlanta, GA (June 19, 2014): The Diabetes Community Action Coalition (DCAC) of Fulton County has launched an awareness campaign “Don’t Let Diabetes Knock You Off Your Feet!” in recognition of Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy Alert Day in Georgia on June 20th. The long-term goal of the campaign is to prevent diabetes-related lower limb amputations.

“It is important that Georgians with diabetes be aware of the dangers and warning signs of diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN), a type of nerve damage to the feet, and to adopt healthy lifestyle choices to better control their diabetes and ultimately prevent the onset or severity of this life-changing condition,” says DCAC Co-Chair Vicki Karnes, RN.

Numbness or tingling in the feet is the most common early symptom. If ignored, DPN can cause foot pain so intense it interferes with sleep at night. DPN can also lessen the ability to feel pain, heat, and cold, which means that people living with diabetes may not feel a cut or other breakdown in the skin. When diabetes is uncontrolled, a wound is slow to heal and an infection may spread from the skin to the bone.

DPN accounts for more diabetes-related hospitalizations than any other diabetes complication. The rate of amputations in people with diabetes is ten times higher than for people without diabetes.

In the recently released [National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2014](#), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 73,000 non-traumatic lower-limb amputations were performed on adults with diabetes in 2010. Nearly 3,000 of these lower limb amputations were performed on Georgians living with diabetes. “The disturbing news is that these diabetes-related lower limb amputations are largely preventable,” says Dr. Wesley Daniel, Executive Director of the Georgia Podiatric Medical Association.

It is recommended that Georgians with diabetes “team up” with their physician and other members of the healthcare team to ask questions about preventing DPN, and receive a comprehensive foot exam from their health care provider or a podiatrist at least once a year. “Many people in Georgia do not have a regular doctor,” says Ms. Karnes. “We encourage Georgians who need to find a low-cost health care provider anywhere in Georgia to call **PowerLine** at 1-800-300-9003.”

“For those living with diabetes and DPN, the good news is that there are steps to take to lower the chances of serious problems with the feet,” says Dr. Daniel. “These include:

- For those who smoke, seek assistance to stop smoking,
- Wear socks and good-fitting shoes at all times,
- Check your feet every day for sores, blisters, and cuts,
- Work with a diabetes care team to get blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol under control.
- If you have diabetic nerve pain, ask your doctor about medications that might provide relief.
- If you are a Medicare beneficiary, you may be eligible for certain services and supplies such as visits to a podiatrist or therapeutic shoes or inserts to prevent foot problems.”

“According to the CDC, one in three people living with diabetes in Metro Atlanta do not know that they have it,” says Ms. Karnes. “Common symptoms of diabetes include increased thirst, urination, and hunger; blurred vision; and numbness or tingling in the feet. If you have any of these symptoms, it is important to be checked for diabetes in the office of a health care provider.”

The mission of the Diabetes Community Action Coalition of Fulton County is to improve the health, function, and quality of life of all Fulton County residents who are at risk for, or affected by, diabetes. To learn more about the awareness campaign, visit www.dcacfulton.org or call 740-807-1054.

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