

# The Role of the Case Manager

As a case manager, you are well aware of your importance in helping patients manage their disease over time. Whether it's one-on-one patient dialogue, helping your patients navigate the reimbursement and healthcare-reform maze, explaining treatment options across the continuum of care, or facilitating patient education, understanding, and support, you are the healthcare professional patients rely on.

This is especially important when it comes to diabetes. As a case manager who has worked with patients with diabetes, you are aware of the complications that may arise if the condition is left unchecked. One of these complications is diabetic macular edema (DME), which can occur before your patient experiences any symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

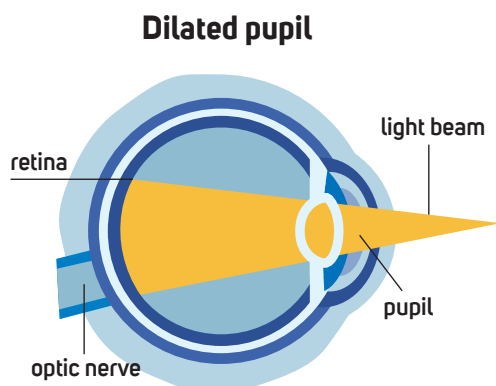
**Early diagnosis and treatment are important. If not treated, DME can cause vision problems and even vision loss.<sup>1</sup>**

## You Can Make a Difference

There are over 35,000 board-certified case managers today across the United States and abroad—and the numbers are growing. Case managers play an important role in helping patients understand their disease, treatment options, and financial options, as well as helping them stay on track.<sup>2</sup>

You can help your patients with diabetes manage their disease, which includes encouraging them to eat healthy, exercise, and monitor their blood sugar (A1C) levels.

You can help motivate your patients with diabetes to get a dilated eye exam once a year to determine if diabetic retinopathy or DME may be present. This is especially important because **DME can start even before they notice any symptoms.<sup>1</sup>**



**Patients with diabetes should get a comprehensive dilated eye exam at least once a year.<sup>1</sup>**

**You can support your patients with diabetic macular edema (DME) in coping with vision loss by offering tips, suggestions, and assisting them in managing their diabetes and DME—whether it be walking, shopping, maneuvering around the house, or spending time at the computer.**

## **Tools at Your Disposal**

This case manager toolkit is designed to be an all-in-one resource for both you and your patients. You'll find material on diabetic retinopathy and DME, the importance of early detection, information on diagnostic tools, help for caregivers, questions to ask the doctor, patient assistance websites, and more.

Some of these pieces contain background information for you as well as your patients. Others are designed as patient and caregiver handouts only.

You are a key member of your patient's care team, especially for patient support, education, and disease management. This toolkit can help you make it count.

In addition, there are many websites with educational and disease-state resources available to help your patients with DME. These include the American Diabetes Association ([www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)) and the National Eye Institute ([www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)).



 **[www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org)**

 **[www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov)**

**References:** **1.** Facts about diabetic eye disease. National Institutes of Health, National Eye Institute website. <https://www.nei.nih.gov/health/diabetic/retinopathy.asp>. Accessed March 9, 2015. **2.** Commission for Case Manager Certification. <http://http://ccmcertification.org/policymakers/faqs-about-case-management>. Accessed July 27, 2015.