

Expanding Access to Diabetes Self-Management Education through Technical Assistance

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Background:

- Diabetes remains a major public health challenge in New York City (NYC), with disproportionate impacts across racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups¹
- Evidence-based programs like Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) are lacking in areas with high diabetes prevalence
- The National Standards for DSMES is a comprehensive document with guiding principles for healthcare professionals to care for people with diabetes²

2022 National Standards for DSMES		
Standard 1 Support for DSMES Services	Standard 2 Population and Service Assessment	Standard 3 DSMES Team
Standard 4 Design and Delivery of DSMES Services	Standard 5 Person-Centered DSMES	Standard 6 Measuring and Demonstrating Outcomes of DSMES Services

These 6 standards make up the application for accreditation/recognition as a DSMES program by two National Accrediting Organizations (NAOs): the Association of Diabetes Care & Education Specialists (ADCES) and the American Diabetes Association (ADA). To maintain accreditation/recognition, DSMES programs must adhere to the National Standards, submit de-identified annual status reports, conduct quality improvement projects, ensure all team members maintain licensure and certifications, submit a renewal application every 4 years, and comply with auditing procedures. These requirements create significant administrative burden and demand considerable time and resources.

Approach:

NYC REACH is operated by the Bureau of Equitable Health Systems in the NYC Health Department whose goal is to apply policy, evidence, and practical expertise to improve equity in health care delivery at the individual, organizational, and systems levels. NYC REACH staff are trained and experienced practice facilitators who provide direct technical assistance to over 1,800 providers and organizations in NYC.

In 2021, the NYC Health Department became an ADCES-accredited DSMES program to improve access to and utilization of DSMES services across NYC via direct delivery of group DSMES in neighborhoods where access is limited.

The program also seeks to expand training and technical assistance through an umbrella hub model to support the implementation of DSMES services in areas with high diabetes prevalence. Umbrella sites will receive their own accreditation certificate, be eligible for reimbursement from public and private payers, and track the similar outcomes: ADCES7 Self-Care Behaviors, Hemoglobin A1C, and Diabetes Distress Scale (DDS-2).



The Umbrella Hub Model is a scalable, sustainable way to expand access to Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) where it's needed most.



Take a picture for a comprehensive review of this program

References:
 1. Olson D, Zhilkova A, Jiang Q, et al. Diabetes and Health Inequities among New York City Adults. New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Epi Data Brief (146); May 2025.
 2. Davis J, Fischl AH, Beck J, et al. 2022 National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support. Diabetes Care. 2022;45(2):484-494. doi:10.2337/dc21-2396

Methods:

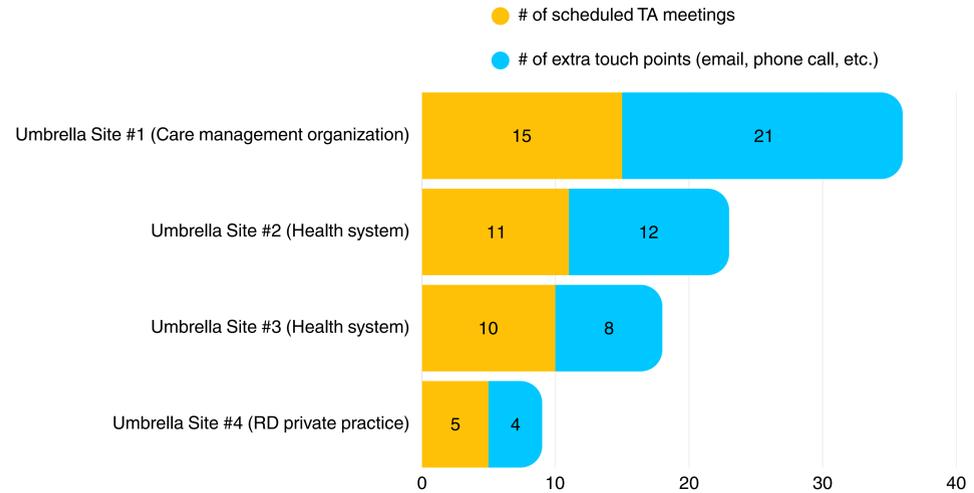
To identify potential umbrella sites, we leveraged NYC REACH's existing professional relationships with health systems, FQHCs, and small practices. The team conducted introductory meetings with interested sites to outline expectations and benefits.

Workflow for interested umbrella sites:

- Complete a capacity assessment to determine the level of technical assistance (TA) needed to achieve accreditation and meet National Standards
- Sign a program agreement that outlines mutual expectations and accreditation
- Attend biweekly or monthly virtual TA meetings to review the National Standards, walk through NYC REACH fillable templates for each National Standard, review the NYC REACH billing toolkit, assess and adjust workflows and EHR documentation, streamline data reporting, and troubleshoot any issues that arise
- Once all National Standards are met, the umbrella site is added to the NYC Health Department's Diabetes Education Accreditation Program (DEAP) dashboard to receive its own branch certificate in order to start billing for DSMES services
- After accreditation is achieved, umbrella sites submit de-identified data every quarter to the NYC Health Department through a secure electronic system. These data are cleaned and included in the annual status report submission to ADCES
- Continue ad hoc meetings and ongoing trainings on DSMES-related topics (e.g. updates to the ADA Standards of Care, best practices with referring to DSMES, etc.)

Results:

Four organizations have signed the program agreement and begun TA meetings to meet accreditation standards. As of July 2025, umbrella sites #1 and #2 are accredited.



Lessons Learned:

- Start conversations early with umbrella sites' IT departments when adjusting EHR documentation
- Develop custom visit types and referral templates within the EHR to streamline DSMES integration into clinical workflows, especially in multi-site systems
- Use pre-developed templates and examples of accepted documentation to accelerate the application process
- Leverage existing relationships with clinical partners to build trust and encourage engagement

