

An employer's guide: diabetes management vs. reversal

As employers' costs track with the rising number of employees diagnosed with diabetes, many are seeking solutions that help make life easier for their workforce while also lowering the overall cost of diabetes care. Teladoc Health empowers people living across the diabetes spectrum to live better and healthier lives through our accessible, clinically proven and results-driven Diabetes Management Program. While you evaluate the various diabetes care offerings, be cautious of companies that make claims not approved by the medical community and use this guide to help address the critical questions that will help you find the optimal solution for your organization.

Is there any validity to the claim that diabetes can be reversed?

According to the American Diabetes Association (ADA), the term "diabetes reversal" is inaccurate. The medical consensus¹ is that diabetes can be successfully managed to the point where people can sustain glucose levels within a normal range and no longer need certain medications to treat diabetes, such as metformin. The ADA defines this as remission, not reversal. While some organizations approach diabetes with a focus on one or two factors such as diet, we address the whole person, which includes a personalized nutrition approach that creates more sustainable and healthier habits to achieve remission. These strategies are clinically sound, easy to adopt and employ a range of support tools, including data-driven personalization, coaching, education and self-management plans.

How does the diabetes program serve people from across the diabetes spectrum?

Effectively managing diabetes requires a personalized holistic approach that goes beyond just a diet. When choosing a diabetes management solution, it's important to select a partner that supports your employees wherever they are in their diabetes journey—whether recently diagnosed or living with diabetes for decades. The Teladoc Health diabetes management solution cares for people living with type 1 and type 2 diabetes, as well as those at risk of developing the condition (prediabetes) by providing personalized expert coaching, education and self-management support.

What other factors should I consider when selecting a diabetes management solution?

The most clinically effective and impactful solution should also address some of the social determinants of health—like access barriers—that can prevent people with diabetes from achieving their health goals. For example, remote monitoring devices make it easier for people to stay on top of their blood sugar and get personalized feedback without having to travel to a clinic, and inclusive diets are readily available to more people compared to diets like keto that are expensive and culturally restrictive.

Our approach to creating data-driven personalized care plans reduces barriers and makes reaching health goals a reality for more people.

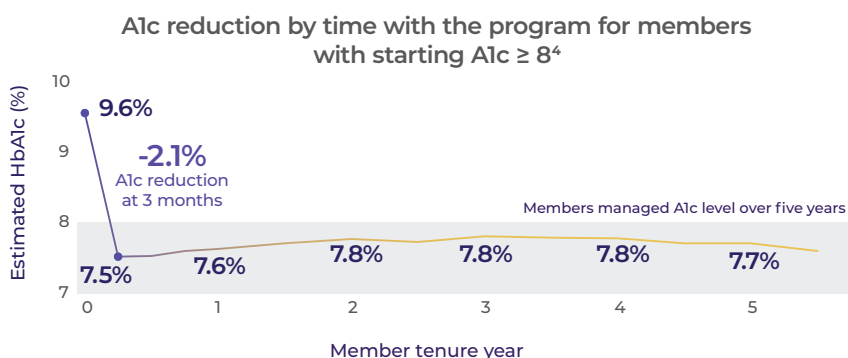
Fact: With member support in over 240 languages, Teladoc Health can extend culturally and linguistically appropriate access to healthcare resources to achieve more equitable care and better clinical outcomes.

What should I look for when evaluating the success of a diabetes program?

An effective diabetes management solution will have demonstrable data proving real-world clinical results, ideally over a substantial period of time. Some programs highlight significant clinical outcomes and savings, but their approach to diabetes management is narrowly focused on one element, such as a rigorous diet, that is difficult to maintain for the long term. Others report data with clinical studies that are not randomized or have selection bias and/or include in-person care when the actual product is virtual only.

The Teladoc Health program delivers sustainable results with members keeping their managed A1c levels for five or more years. Our holistic approach is multifaceted—using activity, nutrition, coaching and more. This whole-person approach delivers significant savings and clinical results, including an average 2.1% reduction in A1c in the first three months², and helps sustain those results for years. A >0.5% A1c reduction is considered clinically significant by the medical community³ and is associated with long-term clinical benefits, such as a 10% reduction in cardiovascular complications.⁴

Meaningful and sustained results



When mental health services were integrated into chronic care management, members saw:

- 0.5% average **additional A1c reduction**⁵
- 9.6 mmHG **additional reduction in systolic blood pressure**⁶
- 1.8% **additional weight loss**⁷

Teladoc Health provides stronger outcomes at year five

5-year data	Diabetes Management Program ⁸ (Teladoc Health data)	Diabetes Reversal Program (competitor data)
Sample size	11,000+	122 ⁹
Overall retention rate at 5 years	80+%	42% ⁹ (promote 72% retention from years 2-5)
Impact on high-acuity members (% of members with A1c ≥9 that were moved to ≤9%)	79.5%	20% ¹⁰

Fact: Data from our proprietary connected blood glucose monitor, plus integration with other health technologies—like Apple Watch®—and continuous glucose meters, allow us to proactively engage members with personalized, timely and actionable outreach that builds healthier habits.

What are the primary benefits of offering a holistic diabetes management solution?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 40% of adults in the U.S. have two or more chronic conditions¹¹ such as diabetes or hypertension, so a unified chronic care management solution that considers the whole of a person's health and meets them where they are is critical to its success. Most programs offer a fragmented experience for these members, often requiring them to have multiple apps and coaching care teams that don't communicate, resulting in a lack of clinical care coordination and lower member engagement.

Teladoc Health's personalized care approach drives significant and immediate results which are sustained over five years or more. **Comparing our results over five years to other programs, our Diabetes Management Program enrolls a much broader base of people with chronic conditions and achieves better outcomes overall.**⁸ Plus, Teladoc Health can drive greater impact for members with more complex needs.

How can I evaluate my organization's cost savings with the diabetes program?

When considering a diabetes management solution, it's crucial to understand a program's value in relation to its guaranteed clinical results and impact on the total cost of healthcare for your employees. Teladoc Health solutions focus on lowering both medical and pharmacy costs and gaining better clinical control over a broad member population. Offerings by organizations that claim diabetes reversal can cost 300% more than our programs—even more when taking into consideration the costs of people dropping out of their programs. We also engage a much broader base of a client's population with 100% of members with diabetes eligible and a 35% enrollment rate. Those members continue to stay engaged in our program, with 85%+ retention at two years. And most importantly, 48% of our members achieve A1c ≤6.5% at two years.¹¹ When you look at the ROI of our program, our lower price point and higher enrollment and retention lead to larger-scale savings. Plus, we back our outcomes with 100% fees at risk.

By engaging more employees with personalized programs and healthy, sustainable approaches, we can generate stronger outcomes—ultimately driving higher savings overall. For example, there are 35% fewer emergency room visits among members who receive expert coaching as part of our Diabetes Management Program.¹³

What other outcomes should be considered aside from nutrition?

Employers should evaluate a program's clinical resources as a whole. While this includes nutrition, it should not be the sole focus. Teladoc Health takes a holistic approach to chronic condition management to support the whole person, including mental healthcare, coach outreach and provider-based care, which connects members with a Teladoc Health physician to create a personalized care plan for adjusting medications safely—all with continuous support from a dedicated care team.

Other virtual diabetes programs focus on rigid diets that don't work for a broad population—such as the keto diet. While a low-carb diet can help to control blood sugar, the restrictive keto diet carries substantial health risks. Short-term risks¹⁴ include development of headache, brain fog, tiredness, dizziness, nausea, constipation and reduced energy—a syndrome referred to as the “keto flu”. Potential adverse effects of long-term keto diet use on cardiovascular disease outcomes remain a concern within the medical community.¹⁵ There is also the risk of developing a life-threatening condition called ketoacidosis, which is one reason that the diet goes against clinical guidelines¹² by the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists. Our approach combines sound nutritional guidance with expert coaching, effortless data collection, personalized health signals and a human-centered approach to help people control their diabetes and prediabetes and get on the path to better health.

Our program:

- Is recognized by the ADA as a Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) recognition program
- Includes a connected meter and no-cost-to-the-member testing lancets and strips to make it easier for people to log, understand and manage their diabetes
- Offers 24/7 support: Diabetes Response Specialists reach out for acute high or low glucose events

Fact: Teladoc Health certified health coaches reach out proactively to members within minutes of an out-of-range reading registering on our proprietary blood glucose meter, helping them gain better control of their blood sugar and avoid a medical emergency.

¹<https://diabetesjournals.org/care/article/44/10/2438/138556/Consensus-Report-Definition-and-Interpretation-of>

²Member tenure year 0: average self-reported A1c at registration. Data Source: DS-10501.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cca.2012.12.026>.

³Little, R. R., & Rohlfing, C. L. (2013). The long and winding road to optimal HbA1c measurement. Clinica chimica acta; international journal of clinical chemistry, 418, 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cca.2012.12.026>.

⁴A1C and eAG | ADA. (n.d.). Retrieved September 23, 2022, from <https://diabetes.org/diabetes/a1c/a1c-and-eag>.

⁵Data on file (DS-8467).

⁶Data on file (DS-8468).

⁷Data on file (DS-4869).

⁸Data on file (DS-11508).

⁹Volk B et al. A Population Shift in Meeting Glycemic Targets Following Five Years of a Very-Low-Carbohydrate Intervention (VLCI) and Continuous Remote Care (CRC). Diabetes 1 June 2022.

¹⁰Data provided by Virta Health at Moonshots for Health Webinar October 13, 2022"

¹¹<https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/infographic/chronic-diseases.html>

¹²Data on file (DS-8089).

¹³Data on file (DS-1580).

¹⁴doi: 10.3389/fnut.2021.702802. doi:10.1001/jamainternmed.2019.2633. <https://doi.org/10.2337/ds19-0070>.

¹⁵<https://www.pcrm.org/news/health-nutrition/experts-endorse-plant-based-diet-diabetes-treatment>

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About Teladoc Health: Teladoc Health is transforming the healthcare experience and empowering people everywhere to live healthier lives. Recognized as the world leader in whole-person virtual care, Teladoc Health leverages more than a decade of expertise and data-driven insights to meet the growing virtual care needs of consumers and healthcare professionals.

