



**Lions Clubs International  
FOUNDATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Undeterred by COVID, Lions Clubs of Michigan and the NKFM continue  
to fight Number 1 cause of blindness — diabetes  
November is National Diabetes Month**

DETROIT, MICH. – (October 27, 2020) – In honor of November being National Diabetes Month, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan (NKFM) and the Lions Clubs of Michigan (LCM) are highlighting their continued commitment to offering the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) and other lifesaving programs to Michigan residents.

In 2018, the Lions Clubs International Foundation awarded a grant to the LCM to fund diabetes prevention, education and awareness to Lions Club members and their communities. In 2019, the LCM and the NKFM collaborated to provide an 8-week Defense Against Diabetes (D.A.D.) program to Lions Club members. NKFM Program Coordinator Ed Bohach works with Lions Club district Leaders Roger Blackwell, Ron Coleman, and Julia Embury to continue providing D.A.D., the DPP, and other healthy lifestyle programs.

After the initial success of D.A.D., and its enthusiastic welcome by club members, the LCM is now sponsoring individuals to attend these programs in the Michigan cities and townships in their districts. Many of the community members served are either uninsured or underinsured and would otherwise not be able to access these lifesaving programs. These leaders agreed that by using grant funds in this way, it will have the greatest impact on the health of many community members.

During the pandemic, the NKFM shifted their programs, including those sponsored by the LCM, to an online format to continue providing communities with the education and awareness necessary to prevent type 2 diabetes. “Our bottom line is that we want to

help people by collaborating in this way... really helping people improve their health and save their lives,” states NKFM Program Coordinator Ed Bohach.

Over recent months, the work of this partnership became even more relevant, since people with type 2 diabetes are at greater risk for developing complications from COVID-19. Studies in the U.S. show that having diabetes increases the risk of hospitalization, the need for critical care, and death due to COVID-19. Individuals with diabetes have accounted for 7.8% to 33% of all hospital deaths.

On October 22, the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan (NKFM) honored the Lions Clubs of Michigan (LCM) for raising funds and collaborating with the NKFM on ways to prevent the number one cause of vision loss up to and including blindness — type 2 diabetes. The NKFM held a video conference where NKFM President and CEO Linda Smith-Wheelock presented the LCM an Appreciation Award for these achievements. District Leaders Roger Blackwell (Macomb, Oakland counties), Ron Coleman (Monroe, Wayne counties) and Julia Embury (Bay, Genesee, Saginaw, Tuscola counties) accepted the award for LCM.

“Diabetes complications are so severe. If people can manage their conditions, they don’t have to go into kidney failure or blindness,” states Smith-Wheelock. “What you have done in this state is so awesome from our perspective. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.”

For more information on all NKFM programs, visit [NKFM.org](https://www.nkfm.org), contact Ed Bohach at 800-482-1455, x 242, or email [ebohach@nkfm.org](mailto:ebohach@nkfm.org).

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### **About the NKFM**

The mission of the **National Kidney Foundation of Michigan** is to prevent kidney disease and improve the quality of life for those living with it. With more than a million people in Michigan affected by kidney disease, the NKFM works to provide life-changing programs and services across the state. For the past 12 years, Charity Navigator — the nation’s leading nonprofit evaluator — has recognized the NKFM with its highest rating of 4 stars for success in sound fiscal management. [NKFM.org](https://www.nkfm.org)

### **The Lions Clubs of Michigan**

The Lions Clubs of Michigan are part of Lions International, a volunteer organization dedicated to leadership development through community service. They have been fighting blindness and serving the visually impaired since 1917. **Lions Clubs of Michigan** have over 12,000 members in over 500 clubs throughout Michigan.

[LionsofMI.com](https://www.lionsofmi.com)