## Problem
- Multi-disciplinary group formed in 2018 to provide education, resources and support for high-risk youth with type 1 Diabetes (T1D) and their parents.
- Three in-person meetings were held in 2019/2020 but suspended after 3rd group due to pandemic restrictions.
- Data demonstrated sessions were positively received, and attendees still wanted to meet. How will the group pivot, keep momentum and provide sessions safely amid Covid-19?

## Program Goals
- To continue regularly scheduled groups through video conferencing and build on established successes.
- To offer education and resources virtually while maintaining attendance and engagement of parents and youth.
- To expand outreach and attendance through the modality of video conferencing and transition to future in-person sessions.

## Strategies
- Increase meeting frequency from quarterly to monthly to keep interest on a continuum.
- Breakout room and session themes alternated to maintain interest:
  - Education (i.e., Technology updates) and Guest Speakers; virtual format, allowed option for national or international speakers.
  - Duplicated in-person session strategies, separate parent and youth group education and discussions using clustered approach:
    - Parent and youth breakout rooms.
  - Designed a point/prize incentive program to keep it upbeat, competitive and fun for the youth.
- Assess availability of staff during the planning process:
  - Endocrinologist, Psychologist, Certified Child Life Specialist, Social Work (if available) and 2 Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialists (CDCES). Staffing was easier in virtual format.
- Communication: use RSVP survey, emails, phone/reminder calls.
- Incorporate survey RSVP data and topic requests of families in session format choices at all steps of planning.

## Results to Date
- First video conferencing group held 11/2020.
- Staff and families able to use the video conferencing model with surprising ease.
- Incentives were given every fourth meeting and points awarded for participation and not attendance only as originally planned. This increased involvement of our youth during the break-out room session. In addition, Diabetes Camp Scholarships were given to those attending consecutive sessions (8 scholarships provided in 2023)²
- Prizes and scholarships obtained through the funding of Kovler Diabetes Center.
- Email blasts, reminder emails, surveys, calls and RSVPs proved successful in maintaining and increasing attendance (75% of reminder called families attended sessions).
- Following family input, as pandemic restrictions lifted, every other session was held in-person starting in 06/22. This change resulted in a surge of new families attending.
- Figure 1 illustrates meeting attendance over time from 7/2019 to 6/2023 with a marked increase for in-person sessions post pandemic.

## Next Steps
- Continue with current format of program; alternating video conference and in-person groups.
- Establish a Parent Board and a Buddy Program to engage parents and youth.
- Increase meeting frequency from quarterly to monthly to keep the group*.
- Develop a business plan with budget for further growth.
- Duplicated in-person session strategies, separate parent and youth group education and discussions using clustered approach:
  - Parent and youth breakout rooms.
  - Designed a point/prize incentive program to keep it upbeat, competitive and fun for the youth.
  - Assess availability of staff during the planning process:
    - Endocrinologist, Psychologist, Certified Child Life Specialist, Social Work (if available) and 2 Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialists (CDCES). Staffing was easier in virtual format.
  - Communication: use RSVP survey, emails, phone/reminder calls.
  - Incorporate survey RSVP data and topic requests of families in session format choices at all steps of planning.

## Conclusions
- This program thrived during a world-wide pandemic and continues to expand as restrictions have been withdrawn.
- Use of a multi-disciplinary team, innovative forward thinking, and consideration of the desires/wishes of families have been tools used to sustain and grow the group.
- The latest event, June 10, 2023, Our First Annual Picnic with 75 attendees was the largest in-person session thus far!
- One mom of a pre-teen with T1D wrote: “Thank you so much for having the foresight to host the groups. The information received was invaluable and helped us make the best decisions for Jalen”. We are very grateful to you guys!”

## References

## Acknowledgements
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**Figure 1 Pre and Post Covid-19 Meeting Attendance**

**Figure 2: Pre Covid-19 Meeting Youth group and Parent Group**

**Figure 3: Post Covid-19 In-person Group**