



Rotary Action Group for Diabetes
District 6360, Michigan, USA

Contact:
T. R. Shaw Jr.
Board Member, Rotary Action Group for Diabetes
TRSBCMI@gmail.com
(269) 209-5555
www.rag-diabetes.org

DISTRICT 6360 ROTARIANS TAKE LEAD IN ROTARY'S DIABETES EFFORTS; NAMED TO ROTARY'S ACTION GROUP AT SINGAPORE CONVENTION

Singapore—Three District 6360 Rotarians were elected to serve with Rotary's Action Group for Diabetes (RAG-Diabetes) at the Action Group's Annual Meeting during the Rotary International Convention in Singapore in May.

T. R. Shaw Jr., of the Cereal City Sunrise Rotary Club, was re-elected to the group's Board of Directors along with Rotarians from Belgium, United Kingdom, Philippines and the U.S.

Dick Hewitt, of the Portage Rotary Club, longtime Diabetes educator and advocate was appointed as a RAG-Diabetes Ambassador along with Rod Auton of the Battle Creek Rotary Club. Hewitt also serves on the Michigan Collaborative for Type 2 Diabetes, (MCT2D) an outreach and education program of the University of Michigan. Auton, Battle Creek Rotary Club incoming President, works with the Battle Creek Community Foundation on Healthcare issues and has been active with Calhoun County Healthcare.

Ambassadors assist with diabetes education and outreach at the club and district level and are part of a worldwide network work of Rotary Diabetes advocates.

District 6360 is a demonstration District for how Rotary addresses the diabetes epidemic. Diabetes is our area and the world's fastest growing healthcare issue and will touch one in three people in the next 20 years according to several sources. Southwest Michigan and Calhoun County lead the state in Diabetes incidence, according to

Michigan Health Department statistics. More than a third of the population is undiagnosed and unaware they have diabetes.

The Rotary Action Group seeks to raise diabetes as the next major health initiative for Rotary as we wind down a very successful polio effort.

Following last year's extremely successful District 6360 Conference, where California Rotarian and RAG-D President Edwin Velarde completed his EPIC Journey against Diabetes, a bike ride from Chicago to Battle Creek..."Windy City to Cereal City," momentum continues to build for Diabetes awareness in District 6360.

Velarde is planning another EPIC Journey from Chicago to Calgary for the 2025 Rotary Convention. He previously organized EPIC rides from Chicago to Toronto, Atlanta and Houston as well as in Europe and Asia for Rotary Conventions.

The Cereal City Sunrise Rotary Club has hosted several diabetes events and screenings and has worked with endocrinologists at Ascension Borgess, Bronson and Grace Health. Under the leadership of Rotarian Robin Morehart and several club members, many more events, both clinical and educational, are being planned. Work also continues on acquiring and establishing a healthy food pantry in Battle Creek as an awareness project.

"In this Rotary year, we hope to expand diabetes efforts throughout District 6360 and engage as many clubs as possible." Shaw said. "It is our hope to set the bar high on how Rotary responds to this healthcare epidemic."

"This coming generation of Rotarians will face diabetes as their single biggest health issue, the numbers are staggering and continue to grow, I also believe our diabetes efforts will be a membership driver for Rotary," Shaw added.

Diabetes-related illness is presently the largest expenditure on healthcare in the United States, and accounts for more than a third of all medical and insurance dollars spent, according to many reports. Diabetes is associated with nearly every other chronic condition, including heart and kidney failure, retinopathy, neuropathy, amputations and obesity. New research also indicates that that diabetes may have a connection with Alzheimer's and Dementia, which some are now calling Type 3 Diabetes for its effect on the brain.

The positive and hopeful side of this is the explosion of awareness and technology, which Rotary can capitalize on. Almost daily, new medications and devices are being developed, including continuous glucose monitors (CGM's) to better manage the condition. "The amount of advertising and awareness campaigns for diabetes has taken it out of the shadows," Shaw said. "Education and self-awareness is key to managing and dealing with diabetes," he added. "RAG-D hopes to introduce Rotarians to the vast resources available to live a healthy and productive life for years to come. Education is power!"

A District RAG-Diabetes Group is still forming and all clubs are invited to participate and get involved. The group will begin presenting programs to clubs and organize events soon. Some of those may include a bicycle tour, fund raisers and awareness campaigns at other regional events. "There are endless opportunities to educate and inform the public about diabetes in the months and years to come," Shaw said.

For those interested in getting involved, contact Shaw at 269-209-5555 or TRSBCMI@gmail.com. For more information on Rotary's efforts, visit the website www.rag-diabetes.org and Like and Join the Facebook group, **Rotary District 6360 Action Group for Diabetes (RAG-D)** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ragd6360/>