



# Health Awareness

## Long Jump Record Holder Takes Steps To Improve His Health

(NAPSA)—Managing diabetes can be an easier task with the right help. It's an important lesson for the 23.6 million people in the United States who have diabetes and one that Olympic gold medalist Bob Beamon had to learn the hard way.

There's a good reason why an extraordinary feat in track and field is often called "Beamonesque." It is said that Beamon made the greatest leap in sports history at the 1968 Summer Games in Mexico City. Nearly 40 years after he set the long jump record, no one has been able to beat Beamon's 29-foot 2½-inch leap in any Olympic competition since.

Today, Beamon puts his best foot forward when managing his chronic conditions, including diabetes and hypertension (high blood pressure). He works with his doctor and a specialist pharmacist, like Beverly Caskey, as an educational resource and to help him manage his medications. Caskey has advanced knowledge about diabetes and related conditions and the medications used to treat them.

"Diabetes is a complex disease, and people like Bob are often overwhelmed when it comes to managing their health and this condition," said Caskey. "I help my patients by providing information, encouragement and counsel about their medications and treatment. I also review their prescriptions when a safety issue arises and



**Former Olympian Bob Beamon attributes his good health to working with his specialist pharmacist.**

alert my patients or their physicians about drug interactions, possible side effects, overly high doses or duplicate medications."

Through Medco Health Solutions, Inc. Beamon and millions of other Americans now have access to specialist pharmacists who concentrate in chronic conditions, like diabetes and hypertension.

"Diabetes runs in my family," said Beamon. "Yet I was shocked when I was diagnosed. I couldn't believe that someone as active as me could have diabetes."

Beamon took steps to improve his health through diet and exercise, and he began testing his blood sugar three times a day. In addition, he began to take medication to control high blood pressure.

"Diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are often interrelated," said Caskey. "Patients with diabetes are at higher risk for heart attacks and

stroke, so it is important that they also have their blood pressure and cholesterol under control."

When a healthy lifestyle wasn't enough, Beamon was prescribed medication to control his diabetes, too. However, the amount of medication he took soon caused problems of its own.

"Throughout my experience with diabetes and high blood pressure, I've had to take many types of medications," said Beamon. "In fact at one point, before I started working with Medco specialist pharmacists, I was on more than 10 different medications, which made me sick."

After three medication-related hospitalizations, Beamon decided to take control of his health. Now working with diabetes pharmacists and his physician, Beamon is taking just two medications to control his conditions.

Specialist pharmacists are trained in specific chronic conditions and have expertise in the medications used to treat them. They perform safety checks to help ensure that medications will not interact with one another or worsen an existing medical condition. They review medications for high doses or duplications and intervene to help lower the risk of side effects. They review medication records to ensure that members are taking their medicine as prescribed by their doctor, and they look for other opportunities that can help improve patient outcomes. Specialist pharmacists may even be able to offer some lower cost options available under one's prescription program.

For more information, go to [www.medcospecialists.com](http://www.medcospecialists.com).



**Pharmacist Caskey**