

Diabetes Maintenance and Prevention Program: Open Door Clinic of Alamance



2009 BRYAN FELLOW

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HOMETOWN: Matthews, NC

MAJOR/DEGREE:
MD, Class of 2012

PROJECT TITLE:
Diabetes Maintenance and Prevention Program,
Open Door Clinic of Alamance County

FACULTY MENTOR:
Dr. John Buse,
Director of the Diabetes Care Center

COMMUNITY PARTNER:
Burlington Open Door Clinic

PROJECT LOCATION:
Alamance County

“Seeing volunteers come so willingly forward to help gave me renewed faith in how communities reach out to help one another.”



The purpose of my fellowship project was to start a Diabetes Maintenance and Prevention Program for the Open Door Clinic (ODC) of Alamance County. The program includes a diabetes treatment algorithm for the regular ODC providers to use in an effort to provide more continuity of care, a diabetes education class offered twice a month, and diabetes specialists coming to the clinic once a month to see the most complicated patients.

Project Goals

1. To provide diabetes education to the underserved population of Alamance County
2. To eliminate the barriers to treatment, such as cost and driving long distances, that the underserved diabetic patients of Alamance County encounter.
3. To provide more continuity of care to all the diabetic patients at the Open Door Clinic
4. To provide more specialized and comprehensive care to the most severe and complicated diabetic patients at the Open Door Clinic

I was inspired to pursue this project by my previous experience volunteering at the Open Door Clinic. My husband and I were volunteers at the ODC throughout my first year of medical school, and we noticed the disproportionate number of diabetic patients. Not only were there a lot of people with diabetes, but the majority of the patients did not appear to have it well managed and under control. From previous work in smoking cessation and nutrition, I already had a passion for preventative medicine, and this seemed like a

great opportunity to put preventative medicine into action – to help fully educate patients on the possible serious complications of diabetes and through education and better management help them to prevent these complications.

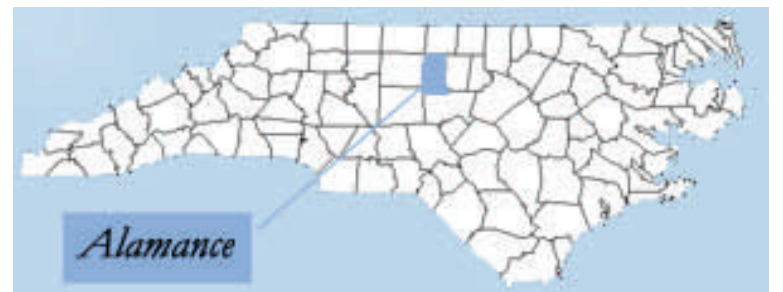
The patient population at the Open Door Clinic of Alamance County includes men and women of low socioeconomic status who do not have health insurance or Medicare/Medicaid. These patients encounter many different barriers when trying to gain access to healthcare and those barriers can be hard to overcome. Through this fellowship I learned a great deal about the treatment of diabetes and specifically how to tailor it to accommodate low-income populations. To accomplish my project goals, I recruited and scheduled several diabetes specialists to see patients monthly, and I developed a diabetes treatment algorithm to provide more continuity of care. I also designed diabetes education classes to fit the needs of the patients and the ODC, and assembled take home packets for class participants.

On the night of our first diabetes education class we had four students. Of the four, one was particularly quiet while the other three interacted and asked questions throughout the evening. After the class was over, the man who had been silent the entire night said, “Well, I learned something!” as he left the room – and that is



all he said all night. In response, the woman in the class said, “I had actually heard it all before years ago, but didn’t do anything about it then. This time I’m going to do something.” At that point, I felt like this class really was going to make a difference in the lives of these patients. All the work seemed worth it.

The Diabetes Maintenance and Prevention Program is currently running indefinitely. I will personally be overseeing the program throughout this year. At the end of May, I will transition many responsibilities to another pre-medical student who volunteers at the ODC. The ODC clinic coordinator will see to smooth transitions of leadership after that, ensuring the improved access to diabetes education and healthcare at the Open Door Clinic in future years.



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