

Dan Chung



“It was very difficult at first,
but Becky has helped me
control my diabetes.”

Medical Home Puts Patients at the Center

When Dan Chung, 59, of Harrisburg was losing weight and not feeling well last spring, he went to FamilyCare of Lower Paxton, part of PinnacleHealth’s primary care network, and was diagnosed with Type II diabetes.

New diabetes patients typically have numerous questions and require a trial and error period of diet and medication modification to get their blood sugar levels on track to avoid complications. Fortunately, as part of a pilot patient-centered medical home (PCMH) approach at the Lower Paxton center, Dan has support from Becky Zook, RN, BSN, MS, CCP, nurse care manager.

Zook gives patients with chronic or complicated conditions individualized support. She meets with them to teach disease management skills and is available by telephone to answer questions or coordinate other facets of their care.

“I act as an extension of the physician or nurse practitioner,” says Zook. “Because a patient like Dan checks in with me regularly, I can give his caregiver a clear picture of what is happening.”

Currently available at Lower Paxton and Marysville FamilyCare centers, in partnership with Capital Blue Cross, PCMH provides a comprehensive approach to primary care. Focused on improving quality, PCMH will ultimately reduce healthcare costs by preventing visits to the Emergency Department or hospitalization. Within six months of the program’s start in April 2010, Zook noted a measurable increase in the number of diabetic patients from the two practices considered to be controlled.

First to Receive The Joint Commission Certification

PinnacleHealth’s inpatient diabetes management program underwent an extensive, on-site evaluation by a Joint Commission reviewer. The comprehensive, independent evaluation provides evidence of the safety and quality of care PinnacleHealth provides to patients with diabetes. PinnacleHealth is the first and only diabetes program in Pennsylvania and one of only 20 nationwide to attain this certification.

In addition:

- A diabetes insulin pump support group began March 2010.
- PinnacleHealth diabetes educators make more than 100 inpatient visits/month.
- PinnacleHealth provides discharge diabetes medications for the uninsured on a monthly basis.

Effects of Diabetes

- According to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Community Health Status Indicators, an average of 7% of adults are at risk for diabetes in Perry, Cumberland and Dauphin counties.
- In Pennsylvania during 2003-2005, an estimated 11% of non-Hispanic African Americans and 9% of Hispanics are affected compared to 8% of non-Hispanic Whites.
- Those individuals in lower income brackets and with limited amounts of education are affected more than those in higher income brackets and with more education.
- Approximately \$1 in \$10 healthcare dollars is attributed to diabetes. (American Diabetes Association, 2008)