

NORTHLAKES COMMUNITY CLINIC: DIABETES CARE MANAGEMENT

At Northlakes Community Clinic (NLCC), the Diabetic Care Management Team recognized a struggle in gaining any traction in improving A1c values for patients with diabetes or increasing testing in patients at high risk of diabetes. An A1c test measures the average amount of glucose in your blood. This number is reported as a percentage, with lower A1c levels indicating more control of the disease. While NLCC offered care management, it was underutilized. The team worked to establish a workflow for distributing professional continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), which has a small sensor that is placed by either a registered nurse (RN) or registered dietitian (RD). After ten days, the patient returns the monitor and meets with the RD to review their A1c values and develop a plan for managing their diabetes. The patient is also offered an opportunity to continue meeting with the RN who will develop a unique care plan and work with the patient to set and meet goals around their diabetes management.

One patient was frustrated by their inability to lower their A1c level despite dramatically cutting carbohydrates and calories. They began working with an RN and RD and monitored themselves with the professional CGM for ten days. The patient was able to identify that they were over-restricting their diet. With this knowledge, they were able to improve their diet and dropped their A1c level from 10.5 to 7.7 in four months, improving their quality of life.

Another patient established care with NLCC to manage a number of symptoms. Their provider identified uncontrolled glucose and poor diabetic management as a major source of their symptoms and referred them to the RD. They used the professional CGM for ten days and identified an average blood sugar of 215, which is considered hyperglycemic. The patient was then able to see that their blood sugar increased with certain foods and dropped with healthier foods and exercise. They started using a personal CGM and now have average blood sugar reading of 155, a noted improvement. They report feeling much better with their healthier diet and habits, including daily walks.



Since 2022, NLCC has seen a 4% decrease in primary care patients with diabetes with an A1c > 9%. Of the patients who used a CGM, 70% saw a drop in A1c levels. Native Americans are NLCC's second largest racial group served, and Native patients in the diabetes care management program saw an average drop of five percentage points in their A1c rates.

Diabetes care management is now available at seven NLCC medical clinics across northern Wisconsin. The clinical successes have also encouraged providers and staff to embrace care management and team-based care for patients. While most of the care management is available onsite, the RNs are experienced working both onsite and virtually as a team. Medical assistants and medical providers help to identify the patients who would benefit from RN care management or meeting with the dietician and offer referrals.

Core Team Members:

- Rebecca Crumb-Johnson, RD, MA, CDCES, RN
- Jayne Hogfeldt, Care Manager
- Lauchette Byrne, Care Manager
- Jackie Karshbaum, Care Manager
- Jill Becker, Care Manager
- Lisa Street, Care Manager
- Billie Given, Care Manager
- Val Hoffman Care Manager

The care managers work closely with the Registered Dietician to identify patients who benefit from care management, developing care plans, and provide education.

Medical Services Manager Angela Lunn works with the team and all medical staff to help implement workflows, ensure care plan development and troubleshoot issues that arise.

