

Diabetes and Cardiovascular Quality Initiatives

Heartland Rural Health Network

The significant increase in the prevalence of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases across the United States, including Highlands, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties has been a source of concern to local health care providers for several years now. Studies have shown that the prevalence of diabetes has increased by 33% over the last decade as a result of an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, the epidemic of obesity, the growth of ethnic groups at risk for the disease and the aging of the population. To help address this issue the Heartland Rural Health Network, Inc. received a Small Health Care Provider Quality Improvement grant from the Federal Health Resources & Services Administration, Office of Rural Health Policy. The grant is for a three year period totaling \$300,000. The funding for subsequent years is based on availability of funds. The purpose of this grant is to improve patient care and chronic disease outcomes by assisting rural primary care providers with the implementation of quality improvement initiatives using the chronic care model and electronic patient registries (EPR). We have partnered with the Florida Academy of Family Physicians Foundation and Medical Director, Dr. Edward Shahady, to implement the Diabetes Master Clinician Program (DMCP) within our rural communities. EPR's capture information on specific conditions and has a population-based focus. The DMCP's EPR provides an opportunity for patients to see how well they are doing in achieving their diabetes goals through patient "report cards" and providers have access to various quality reporting tools. The patient "report card" is issued at each office visit and uses patient oriented language and informs them of their goals, reasons for obtaining tests, performing and exam and receiving medications. The EPR also provides reports that indicate how well a practice is doing in achieving goals compared to all practices utilizing the EPR. Through the Small Health Care

Provider Quality Improvement Grant, HRHN will now have an opportunity to not only focus on diabetes but also work with local providers to address quality improvement strategies relating to cardiovascular disease outcomes.

Medical care providers can attend the Diabetes University which is creation of the Florida Academy of Family Physicians Diabetes Master Clinician Program and the NF SG chapter of the American Diabetes Association. The program goal is to assist nurses and medical assistants in Primary Care Offices with diabetes education of patients with Diabetes.

Heartland Rural Health Network (HRHN) serves the health care needs of Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands & Polk Counties in Florida. For more information about the HRHN go to their web site at www.hrh.org