



Addressing a Health Epidemic: Super-Collaborative to Tackle Obesity and Diabetes

Southern California, as is the rest of the nation, is experiencing an epidemic of diabetes, due in large measure to the rising rate of obesity, a significant risk factor for this chronic disease. Even with a keen awareness of the problem and multiple diabetes treatment programs, "We're barely making a dent in the coming tidal wave of diabetes risk," observes W. June Simmons, President and CEO of Partners in Care. "With a culturally diverse, ever-changing population, the problem is particularly challenging here in reaching and educating people about the dangers of obesity to general health and as a pre-cursor to diabetes."

In response, the Access to Care Collaborative, of which Partners is a member, is playing a key role in the creation of a San Fernando Valley "Super Collaborative" created to develop an effective and coordinated regional program to provide greater access to care, mitigate individuals' risk of developing diabetes, provide timely access to healthcare resources, and, thus, to better manage the suffering and the

costs of diabetes. Members include the executive leadership of the leading Valley area hospitals and several valuable collaboratives. The Super Collaborative will continue to add members. "The members have taken leadership in committing resources to cost-effective solutions to a very fragmented system of care, rallying to respond to a set of challenges it was not designed for," notes Ms. Simmons.

Partners is also pro-active in focusing on diabetes as a core health issue through its own projects and programs, including:

- Disease Prevention and Health Promotion alerts low-income seniors to diabetes warning signs and preventative measures through Los Angeles City Senior Centers;
- Healthy Moves Frail Elderly Exercise Program reaches out to seniors to encourage and train them to engage in appropriate exercises at home;

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Obesity, Diabetes and the Uninsured: The Scope of Problem

Obesity and diabetes are on the rise, with deadly consequences:

- One in three children born since the year 2000 will have diabetes in their lifetime...a looming epidemic.
- Recent studies suggest that many children as young as three years old are already at risk for obesity and related health problems due to unhealthy eating habits.
- In the U.S., of the 18.2 million who have diabetes, an estimated one-third of this population is unaware that they have diabetes.
- In Los Angeles County 37% of the adults and 18% of children are overweight; the diabetes mortality rate increased by 48% over the past decade.
- Within San Fernando Valley diabetes is the fifth leading cause of death.
- Northeast San Fernando Valley has one of the highest rates of diabetes per capita in the Los Angeles area. A recent diabetes screening sponsored by one of the major hospitals in the area revealed that, of the 100 people screened, 28% had very high to dangerous glucose readings.

For Ms. M., Life Becomes Definitely Better At Home

"I'm so blessed that God has spared my life all these years and kept me in my right mind." At 98 years old, the upbeat Ms. M. is leading a new, more vibrant life through the services of Partners' Life is Better at Home/Multipurpose Services Senior Program (MSSP) which provides care management and purchases essential in-home services for low income elderly in portions of Los Angeles County in order to help these frail older people remain at home and avoid nursing home placement.

Ms. M., widowed, her son deceased, and with a grandson far away, had only her church friends to rely on. Diagnosed with breast cancer two years ago, Ms. M. was referred to Life is Better at Home/MSSP after her successful surgery left her weak, "wobbly" from medications, and prone to falls. MSSP provided in-home care-giving, meals, personal care

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A Special Recognition ...and a Welcome



In carrying out its mission of projects and programs that support the independence and dignity of individuals and families, Partners has been enriched by the strengths of active Board leadership

Partners is immensely grateful to Bob Lundy as he completes three years as Board Chair. During his leadership many

positive changes have been guided by his service. We have seen our staff grow from 65 employees to its current 90, and the operating budget grow by almost two million dollars. One of the most significant events is the relocation to San Fernando Community Campus for Health and Education. Now we have a permanent headquarters that will allow us to continue to do our work while

building exciting and important new local resources for care and health career development. Thank you, Bob, for the tremendous value of your gifts of leadership and funding for our work.

Partners welcomes our new Chair – Adrian Stern, a vital member of our Board since our early beginning. His considerable talents bring new ideas and wise counsel as Partners continues to expand and develop its mission of changing health care so it works better for everyone.

We feel fortunate to have come so far in our work with such strong Board leadership.

W. June Simmons
President and CEO

Partners Consultation Services Assist Organizations with Strategic Planning, Evaluation, and Next Steps

Hospitals and health and social service organizations often tap into Partners' expertise in design processes, evaluations and recommendations to help them develop strategic plans and operational analysis to help guide their growth. Consultation services include: assessing current structures, capabilities and staffing; setting priorities, building consensus as to direction and outcomes; and developing recommendations for next steps.

Most recently, Partners is providing consultation services to an urban hospital that will facilitate its development of a plan to

“These consultation projects...help organizations address many unmet community needs...”

evaluate current community benefits funding and recommend a course of direction for aligning community needs and organizational objectives.

Partners also assisted the Los Amigos Education and Research Institute (LAREI) in supporting an organizational analysis and development of a strategic plan for growth and long-term stability. Partners' consultation work created new resources for care of the working uninsured in the San Fernando Valley, subsequently

producing concepts for funding and then contracting administrative support for their implementation for Catholic Health Care West and the Providence Health System in partnership with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Partners provided an evaluation and recommendations for streamlining and expanding senior care services for Beach Cities Health District.

Other projects developed feasibility and business plans for several faith-based organizations seeking to build home care agencies that provide career ladders for low income populations and help

meet the need for affordable quality in-home care. Partners collaborated with the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Southern California in facilitating its annual Board of Directors' strategic planning retreat.

These consultation projects, which complement our work as members of collaboratives, help organizations address many unmet community needs we can see in our communities.

To discuss Partners Consultation Services, contact June Simmons at (818) 837-3775, ext. 101, or email: jsimmons@picf.org

Coordinating The Health of Mothers and Newborns To Engage the Antelope Valley Community

High risk pregnancies are the focus of a new collaborative being formed in Antelope Valley where the rate of poor birth outcomes (24%) outpace other Los Angeles County areas.

The Antelope Valley Best Babies Collaborative (AVBCC) brings together Antelope Valley Partners for Health (AVPH), the lead agency; Black Infant Health; Antelope Valley Hospital; Healthy Homes; WIC; Women’s Clinic; the local Children’s Planning Council; El Nido Family Center; and the Los Angeles County Public Health, Department of Social Services, Department of Mental Health and public health agencies to coordinate care and to promote the health of all families in the Antelope Valley.

Antelope Valley women with chronic diseases and social problems, teens, and African-Americans are especially vulnerable to high risk pregnancies according to County health statistics. The AVBCC aims to provide a continuum of care for women at risk of poor birth outcomes with enhanced outreach and education, early pre-natal care, social services support, and medical services.

“AVBCC is a systematic approach to share resources and effect positive outcomes,” notes James Cook, Executive Director of VNCS which supports AVPH. “Early access to prenatal care is linked to better birth outcomes, including reduction of premature and low birth weight births and its consequent and costly health problems.”



AVBCC will fill gaps in care for at-risk women and their young children. Coordinating outreach, education, and care reaches more high risk women and increases their access to comprehensive services that will lessen economic and social stressors and negative physical health factors.

Collaborative partners will also enlist local providers, faith-based organizations, and other agencies in the community-wide effort. A media campaign, male involvement outreach, and advocacy activities are also part of the plans. “AVBCC is to involve the entire community,” adds Mr. Cook. “And to see measurable improvement in its health and well-being for everyone.”

Partnering: The Highest Level of Charity



Readers of this newsletter will immediately grasp a very salient point about Partners in Care. Since its early days, Partners brings together and works with individuals and organizations who share the vision of creating and operating effective health and community- based social services programs. With our partners, we design and test

new approaches to assure access to the right care in the right place at the right time for families and individuals, especially for those at high-risk for chronic disease.

Tradition lists eight levels of charity; the most worthy of which is to aid is through a gift or loan, or by forming a partnership, or by providing work or the means in order to make them self-supporting and without need of welfare or other assistance.

The work of Partners is guided by this highest level of charity. In forming partnerships with our funders, donors and providers, we are increasing access to care, addressing preventable conditions, reducing serious

problems such as a high rate of infant mortality, promoting and providing resources to help families continue their independence in the face of illness or other serious threats, and improving the quality of life- goals better accomplished with a greater reach and effectiveness than a solo effort. The success of our Families At Risk safety net; building on the strengths of the elderly to stay independent, enjoy the best possible health and master the challenges that arise; and relieving suffering and heading off the deleterious effects of progressive disease is shared with our partners towards enabling self-sufficiency. At this time of the year, we gratefully thank all our supporters for their continued contributions of talent and funding that carries our mission forward in the highest level. And we cordially invite new friends to express their interest in joining us all in Partners’ worthy endeavors.

With our best wishes this holiday season and the New Year,

Adrian Stern
 Partners in Care Board Chair

A Joyful Wedding Dance for Cora Assisted by Stroke Recovery Program

"After receiving physical/occupational therapy and participating in all activities at Santa Clarita Adult Day Health Care, I was able to dance with my son on his wedding day!"

This triumph came for 67 year-old Cora after she suffered a stroke and enrolled in Santa Clarita Adult Day Health Care's Stroke Recovery Program in January, 2005. Initially attending the program three days a week, she quickly increased to five days a week. By September, Cora had reached her goal and flew to Hawaii with her husband to join in their son's wedding celebration.

Success stories like Cora's happen every day at the Stroke Recovery Program for patients who have been told by others they'll never improve. A team of professionals move stroke patients along the progressive path to recovery with a full menu of occupational, physical and speech therapies, exercise activities, and nutritional and medications services to restore function and mobility in a warm, supportive setting – and renew hope to families. Often, gains have been so significant that patients' insurance rehabilitation benefits are reinstated.

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services and special purpose equipment, such as grab bars, that avoided the distressing and more costly nursing home care. Months later, MSSP helped her apply for and assisted with her move from her isolated converted garage residence to a Senior Apartment which they helped her locate and obtain. There, she continues living in her own home in a community of peers. She now socializes with her neighbors and attends meetings, exercise classes and birthday parties in the building.

Still healthy and active, Ms. M. says, "I needed everything your program gave me; now I don't need so much. I feel like I'm getting all these gifts and I'm thankful."

Partners' Life is Better at Home/MSSP program, funded by the California Department of Aging, has the capacity to serve 766 low income and diverse seniors in South Los Angeles and the San Fernando, Santa Clarita, and Antelope Valleys. Its daily watching over the safety and well-being of at-risk low-income frail elderly, 65 years of age and older, and disabled elderly prevents premature and unnecessary nursing home placements. For these seniors, life is definitely better at home.

"Returning to the World" for Traumatic and Brain Injured

Specialized medical, therapeutic, and social services to restore function and mobility for patients with traumatic and brain injuries are available at Santa Clarita Adult Day Health Care. Specialists provide an individualized, integrated care plan that furthers each patient's progress on a continuum of recovery towards increasing their ability to participate in life.



The caring, confidential program of concentrated therapies, social activities, counseling and family support services help restore and re-invigorate patients' quality of life.

Insurance, private pay and Medi-Cal are accepted for both programs. **To learn more and arrange a tour, call Santa Clarita Adult Day Health Care at (661) 253-0700.**

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- Staffing, active member, and fiduciary to the Access to Care Collaborative which provides free care clinics, education, and especially diabetes care for the uninsured working poor in the Northeast San Fernando Valley;
- The Physical Education Program (PEP) targets school children in the Antelope Valley with concentrated physical fitness activities, nutrition education and teacher-parent-child awareness programs;
- Fiduciary support for the grassroots Antelope Valley Partnership for Health (AVHP) and Valley Care Collaborative (VCCC) which are implementing outreach and offering health education and access to health services in their communities;
- The Care-A-Van mobile health clinic which has an active program of outreach for primary care and a strong capacity for diabetes screening and counseling as integral to its basic medical services.

"Bringing together the variety of health-focused Valley organizations and resources concentrates and coordinates our efforts to produce better results in reducing the incidences of obesity and diabetes," explains Ms. Simmons. "In doing so, we are helping individuals reduce their risk and lessen the burden on families and on our health care systems of providing care for undetected, untreated, and unmanaged, as well as identified, diabetes."

Promoting Seniors' Health and Saving Lives

"Life is too precious to shorten it when you can do something to make it better and live it longer." This senior's words rang especially true when, while attending a health fair, her blood sugar was discovered to be so elevated she should not have been on her feet. With prompt medical attention, the senior is now following her diabetes management plan and encourages her friends to follow her example.

Her new outlook is exactly the cause of the Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Program (DHP), a major regional collaborative reaching out to vulnerable seniors through 16 Multi-Purpose Senior Centers serving medically under-served, low income, isolated and hard to reach seniors in Los Angeles. Seniors participate in health screening and assessment, health counseling, medications review, referrals and health education on how to age well and in good health. The student physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, and care managers help seniors set new goals and integrate new healthy changes into their lives.

"I was surprised to learn at the lecture that walking 20 minutes a day, three times a week, could reduce my arthritis' stiffness and pain. After my doctor said OK, I got to walking up to a mile daily and am now able to do more to take care for myself. I feel much better too."

DHP staff see more than 6,000 seniors each year who attend the program's scheduled lectures and events. Funded through the City of Los Angeles Department of Aging, Partners serves as the lead agency and administrator. DHP collaborators are the UCLA Schools of Medicine and Nursing; USC Schools of Pharmacy and Social Work; the USC Andrus Gerontology Center; California State University, Los Angeles and Long Beach Schools of Social Work; and the Family Practice Medical Residency program from Glendale Adventist Medical Center, Loma Linda and USC/Keck Schools of Medicine. DHP also provides new clinical geriatric training opportunities for health care professionals to help train the geriatric-competent workforce needed for the future. Identifying emerging and life-threatening disease and educating seniors on care of their health improves their quality of life and extends their years.

"I was shocked when my screening showed such extremely high blood pressure and that I was in danger of having a stroke. The staff called an ambulance and the hospital saw me right away. Now I'm on the right medications, exercising, and really watch my diet. My pressure is at normal levels. I'm so glad for finding out before anything bad happened."

A Diagnosis Just in Time Saves A Young Woman's Life

"Thank you. Thank you," the young woman cried in relief on her first visit to the Access to Care/MEND free clinic. She was finally going to get the care she desperately needed.

The 30 year-old had lost 20 pounds and had been feeling ill for more than a year. With a very low income and no health insurance, her sister told her about a free clinic which provides twice monthly clinics providing basic health services for uninsured, working poor adults residing in specified ZIP codes in the Northeast San Fernando Valley.

Diagnosed with diabetes, the woman's immediate health was in great danger. The Clinic's treatment, medications, and on-going follow-up are helping her manage her diabetes now and help reduce the disease's devastating consequences of heart disease, blindness and other severe effects. The Clinic is on the front line of basic care for hard-working people who neglect their health for

fear of losing work days and their jobs. Volunteer physicians and health professionals donate their services while an outreach health education and screening program identifies those at-risk. Timely access to medical care gives hope of preserving health and lessening suffering.

Established in 2001, The Access to Care Collaborative, sponsor of the Clinic, is a collaborative of Providence Health System-San Fernando Valley Region, the Los Angeles Archdiocese, Mission Community Hospital, Partners in Care and MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity). Partners in Care funding is provided by grants, private foundations and individual donors.

"I'm afraid of what would have become of me," says the grateful patient. "Bless the people at the Clinic and those who see that it's here for people like me."



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For More Info

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Save These Dates:

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May 3, 2006
Vision & Excellence in Healthcare Leadership Tribute Dinner
Reserve now: (818) 837-3775, ext. 131

Hospice of Pasadena
Light Up A Life
Tree Lighting Dec. 2
Huntington Hospital Main Lobby
Memorial Stars: call (626) 397-3600

How we are changing healthcare

Partners in Care changes the shape of healthcare and social services to work better for everyone.

Partners is unique in two ways: we are both a think-tank and a proving ground.

Partners develops high-impact, innovative ways of bringing more efficient health and social services to people and communities.

Our direct services measure, refine and replicate these innovative programs and services and bring needed care to diverse people and communities.