

## **LIBRARY LENDS A HELPING HAND TO RESIDENTS WITH DIABETES**

*Diabetes Prevention and Control Program helps create community-based diabetes self-management education program and resource center*

### **Public Health Problem**

- A third of African American women over age fifty in the District of Columbia have diabetes, as well as twenty percent of people who are unable to work.
- Diabetes is a leading cause of kidney failure and stroke in the District of Columbia.
- The District of Columbia Primary Care Association found that entire communities lacked adequate access to routine medical services and ongoing treatment for problems such as diabetes.
- Teaching people to manage their diabetes by taking necessary medication, eating right, being active and getting important medical tests helps them prevent or delay complications, saves health care dollars and improves their quality of life.

### **Program**

- The Diabetes for Life Learning Center was developed in collaboration with the District of Columbia Public Library System, the Department of Health Diabetes Prevention and Control Program and a local health care organization in response to the need for improving the self management skills of people with diabetes and providing peer support in a safe, easy to access community space.
- The Center provides structured diabetes education, an ongoing diabetes support group, medical lab tests for blood sugar and learning resources including computers designated for participant's use to promote the best clinical outcomes for residents with diabetes.

### **Impact**

- The Diabetes for Life Learning Center improved access to diabetes education and had an impact on over a thousand primarily African-American people with diabetes, many of whom had had no prior self-management training.
- Participants in a follow-up group showed improvements in blood sugar control, which research shows is associated with significant health care cost savings and improved long-term health outcomes.
- Evaluation results also show:
  - An increase in participant knowledge of treatment recommendations
  - Improved attitude about their disease
  - Fewer costly visits to hospital emergency departments for diabetes problems such as blood sugar that's too high or too low
- The Diabetes for Life Learning Center won the 2007 Public Health Award in Organization Achievement from the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association.

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