

Population and Community Health News

Advancing Health

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center



Connecting patients to essential services.

Program designed to support our communities.

Inside: Preventing diabetes through positive change. | Providing patients with healthy food options.

Letter from the President.



During the past two years, the needs of area residents have never been greater. We have responded by stepping up our efforts in many innovative ways. In this inaugural issue of *Advancing Health*, we highlight how MedStar Health is working to connect our hospitals' patient populations and local communities with the resources they need to live healthier lives.

On the pages that follow, you'll read about three unique initiatives that are making a meaningful difference in people's lives. We highlight our community health advocates, who work to keep patients with chronic conditions out of the hospital by connecting them to needed social services—ultimately improving their health. We feature a program designed to help people prevent diabetes, an extremely important topic given the prevalence of this potentially deadly condition in the Baltimore region. Our third story focuses on food insecurity and the creative ways we are working to promote better health in our communities by increasing access to healthier foods.

Every day, we touch the lives of area residents in ways most people don't even think about. We are privileged to be able to address the community's needs in so many ways, but we know we couldn't do it alone. We are grateful for your support.

In good health,

Stuart M. Levine, MD, FACP

President, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

Contents

3 **Connecting patients to essential services.**

4 **Preventing diabetes through positive change.**

5 **Providing patients with healthy food options.**

6 **Community class schedules.**

At MedStar Health, we offer easy access to great health care in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., via our 10 hospitals and more than 280 other care locations. We're also committed to advancing your care by continuously learning and applying new knowledge. We help our patients and their families feel understood, appreciated, and confident in their care. MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center is proud to be part of MedStar Health. **It's how we treat people.**

Population and Community Health's mission: *Bridging gaps in health care by connecting the populations we serve with resources to enhance their health and wellbeing.*

On the cover: Meet Demeeka Wills, CCHW, certified community health worker and advocate, at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center.



Connecting patients to **essential services.**



Demeeka Wills, CCHW, a certified community health worker and advocate at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, chats with a patient.

An innovative program developed by MedStar Health in 2017 is successfully connecting Baltimore residents in need to hospital-based community health advocates (CHAs) who ensure they receive not only routine primary health care, but vital community services.

Called the Community Health Advocate program, the goal is to serve the needs of the community in a holistic way. The program is designed to support patients by engaging them in care and keeping them out of the hospital for chronic conditions, as well as to help them navigate the complex web of social services.

Offered at all four of MedStar Health's hospitals and affiliated clinics in the Baltimore area, the program now employs 28 full-time CHAs who live in the communities they serve and are therefore well suited to assist in-need patients with accessing resources.

The CHAs are integrated into each hospital's case management teams and participate in post-discharge care planning for patients who are identified as most likely to need support after they leave the hospital. Once these patients are discharged, the CHAs help link them to community-based services that can assist with social needs such as housing, food access, and utility

assistance. The CHAs also provide ongoing support during home visits, helping to ensure patients are not faced with barriers that might interfere with their health or accessing care. They share their experiences, which are often similar, and help forge a relationship with their patients.

Demeeka Wills, CCHW, a CHA at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, sees the positive impact the program has on a daily basis. "Many of the individuals we work with have non-medical challenges that can interfere with and impact their health. A lot of them are seniors with mobility issues. We help them with anything they might need. They truly appreciate having someone they know and can trust to turn to for help."

Since the program began, the CHAs have helped patients who have been threatened with turn-off notices keep their power on. They've helped patients receive aid to retrofit homes with wheelchair ramps and grab bars to increase mobility and independence. They have even helped patients sign up for food stamps and connected primary caregiver family members with financial resources.

"The patients we assist are so grateful and thankful. It is very heartwarming," says Wills. "Our goal is to make sure they are being helped in the best possible way."

For more information about our services, visit [MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth).

Preventing diabetes through positive change.

Odds are you know at least one person with diabetes. And the odds are even greater that you know at least one of the 86 million Americans with prediabetes. The thing is, only 9 million of those with prediabetes know they have it and 15 to 30% of them will develop type 2 diabetes within 5 years.

It's a big problem, especially when you consider that diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in Maryland. The good news is that there are things you can do to prevent prediabetes from advancing to type 2 diabetes. That's the goal of the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP), which is offered by MedStar Health hospitals in the Baltimore region, to address this chronic disease.



Rebecca Hartnett, a community health project coordinator, teaches the virtual DPP class.

"Prediabetes is a condition in which individuals have high blood glucose or hemoglobin A1C levels but they are not high enough to be classified as diabetics," explains Karen R. Polite-Lamma, MSN, RN, program manager, Population and Community Health for MedStar Health, Baltimore region. "By developing and maintaining healthy lifestyle changes, prediabetes can be reversed."

Developed specifically for people who have prediabetes or are at risk for type 2 diabetes, the program is modeled after the National Diabetes Prevention Program, an initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It features a CDC-approved curriculum and trained lifestyle coaches who closely support participants throughout the program. But it's not a quick fix. Rather, it's focused on long-term changes and lasting results.

The group-based program consists of 16 sessions over 6 months, followed by 6 additional monthly sessions, led by a coach who facilitates small groups of people with similar goals. The group support is just as important as the coaching. "We discuss topics such as healthy eating, increasing physical activity, and losing weight as well as behavioral changes," says Polite-Lamma. "A goal of the program is to help participants lose 5 to 7% of their body weight."

Research has shown that if a person with prediabetes loses just 5 to 7% of their body weight through healthier eating and the incorporation of 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week, their risk of developing type 2 diabetes can be reduced by as much as 58%. "For a person who weighs 200 pounds, losing 5 to 7% of their body weight means losing just 10 to 14 pounds. It doesn't take a drastic



Rebecca Peterson, CCHW, certified community health worker and advocate, leads the in-person class.

weight loss to make a big impact," Polite-Lamma says.

Classes are held at various community-based sites across the Baltimore area and online. New programs are available continuously so that individuals interested in participating don't have to wait long to get started. "The key to the program is to follow all the steps," notes Polite-Lamma. "If you do that, the weight comes off in no time."

For more information about the Diabetes Prevention Program offered through MedStar Health, call **855-218-2435**.

**Do you know your diabetes risk?
Take this test today!**

Scan this QR code with your smartphone and take a one-minute quiz to determine your risk for diabetes.



Providing patients with healthy food options.



Many chronic conditions, such as diabetes, can be better managed by following a specific diet. Unfortunately, a lot of patients with these conditions have tight budgets and cannot afford the fresh and nutrient-rich foods they need. Plus, many patients have limited access to supermarkets and other locations where healthy food can be obtained.

MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center is doing its part to change this through a variety of initiatives, including the creation of Food Rx in partnership with the Community Assistance Network (CAN). Scheduled to be up and running by 2023, the program is designed to address food insecurity, especially among individuals with chronic conditions.

“Through this future program, we will be able to provide patients who are managing chronic diseases with easier access to fresh, healthy food,” explains Tricia Isenock, RN, regional director, Population and Community Health for MedStar Health, Baltimore region. “The goal is to support patients in monitoring their health for the long term. Food plays a huge role in a person’s overall ability to be healthy. Eating the ‘right’ balance of food types is particularly important for individuals with conditions such as diabetes.”

Food Rx will be physically located at the Community Assistance Network’s Dundalk location, in newly expanded space. The food pantry is stocked with a wide variety of non-perishable items as well as healthy fresh and frozen food options, thanks to partnerships with several other organizations.

Patients are referred there from several providers at MedStar Franklin



Carly Shroyer, food pantry manager at the Community Assistance Network, assists clients to locate healthy food items.

Square. “Through this program, we are able to ‘prescribe’ and supply patients with the type of meals that will help keep their disease under control,” Isenock says.

CAN and other food pantry partners are resources shared through MedStar Franklin Square to patients who screen positive for food insecurity. Depending on their needs and individual circumstances, patients may be linked to Hungry Harvest,

which delivers boxes of fresh produce and other items to their homes. In addition, the hospital’s community health advocates work with patients on an ongoing basis to connect them with sustainable resources to address underlying food insecurity such as SNAP, Meals on Wheels, and Movable Feast.

To learn more about our Community Health programs, visit [MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/CommunityHealth).

Community class schedules.

At MedStar Health, we care about the health and wellness of our community. One of the ways we try to keep you healthy and active is by offering a variety of free and low-cost special classes, events, and screenings. They include the following:



BIRTH AND FAMILY CLASSES

Prepared Childbirth Weekend Express or 4-Week Series

Preparing mother and her birth partner for labor and childbirth. Offered 1 full day or as a 4-week series (1 night/week).

Breastfeeding: Facts, Myths, and Techniques

Taught by a board-certified lactation consultant to help you get breastfeeding off to a good start.

Infant Care and Safety Class

For expectant and new parents, grandparents, and babysitters. Learn bathing, diapering, and other skills to care for your baby.

Infant and Child CPR

Ideal for expectant parents, daycare providers, and loved ones caring for your baby.

Infant and Child First Aid

Classes can be taken separately or together with CPR (discount applies if taken at the same time). These classes meet the state requirement for daycare providers.

To learn more and register for these classes, visit [MedStarHealth.org/BirthFamilyClasses](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BirthFamilyClasses) or call **888-746-2852**.

CANCER PREVENTION

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings

Call **410-350-2066** for details.

Colon Cancer Screening

Call **410-350-8216** to learn more.

Lung Cancer Screening

Call **410-591-6969** for more information.



DIABETES PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

Diabetes Prevention Program

A program for people with pre-diabetes, who want to reduce their risk for type 2 diabetes. Lifestyle change, 12-month program. Offered virtually or in person.

Call **855-218-2435** for details.

Diabetes Education

If you have diabetes, our educational classes can teach you about self-management of your disease, medical nutrition therapy, continuous glucose monitoring, and more. Virtual appointments are available.

Call **443-777-6528** for details.



Quality and patient safety is a high priority at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center.

We focus not only on the quality of the clinical care you receive but also on assuring you have the best possible experience while receiving that care.

We embrace our SPIRIT value of "Patient First" by including community members in our Quality and Safety Committee meetings. Your voice is important to us and helps us improve our care!

If you would like to learn more about our Quality and Safety initiatives, please visit [MedStarHealth.org](https://www.MedStarHealth.org). Click on the Quality and Safety link at the bottom of the page.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Amputee Support Group

Email jennifer.mcdivitt@medstar.net for details.

Concussion Support Group

Email kate.c.gerber@medstar.net for details.

Stroke Support Group

Email kate.c.gerber@medstar.net for details.

WELLNESS AND PREVENTION

Tobacco Cessation Program

Learn to quit smoking with support from our certified tobacco cessation experts. Four-week classes are free and are virtual or in-person.

Call **855-218-2435** or visit [MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/StopSmoking) for details.

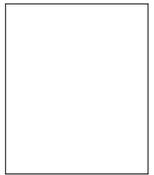
Some activities are temporarily on hold but should resume soon. Take charge and learn how you can stay healthy for life.





MedStar Health

5601 Loch Raven Blvd. • Baltimore, MD 21239
MedStarHealth.org/AdvancingHealth
855-218-2435



Safe disposal of your **prescription medicines.**

If you have expired drugs or medications you no longer use, you may have questions about how to dispose of them properly.

Often unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong hands. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), unused or expired medication is a public safety concern leading to potentially accidental poisoning, misuse, and occasional overdose. Proper disposal of unused drugs saves lives and protects the environment.

Drug Take Back Programs

MedStar Health hospitals in the Baltimore region have introduced a safe and secure way to dispose of your unwanted medications. The pharmacies, located at MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital, MedStar Harbor Hospital, and MedStar Union Memorial Hospital, have installed Drug Take Back boxes. The Drug Take Back box is a secure receptacle that allows the community to properly dispose of old, unwanted, and unused medications.

All narcotics are accepted. If you have or know someone who has these medications, bring them to our hospital locations to dispose of them safely and securely. The box does not allow you to dispose of liquids, syringes, lotions, thermometers, aerosol cans, hydrogen peroxide, and illegal drugs.



To learn more about Drug Take Back options, visit [TakeBackDay.DEA.gov](https://www.dea.gov/takebackday), or your local drugstore or police station.