



From Our Wesley Nurse . . .

Integrated Health Care

Jim (not his real name) had always been a hard worker. His job was his life and he was good at it. Unfortunately, Jim neglected to take care of his health. Jim was hospitalized twice in one month due to life-threatening conditions. Unable to work, he was faced with the reality he had to make significant lifestyle changes.

After hospitalization, Jim followed up with the Elgin Family Community Health Center. At the clinic, Jim was given a screening tool to assess his depression score. The results indicated Jim was clearly depressed. The clinic uses the model of integrated health care. Simply stated, integrated health care is designed to meet the patient's mind, body, spiritual, and many times, social needs. Integrated health care may involve different health care professionals, such as a physician, counselor, and health care educator. Not only did Jim see the physician for his medical care, but also the counselor for his depression. Jim was also referred to Debi Laurents, the Wesley Nurse, for health education.

The Wesley Nurse met with Jim and found he was an uncontrolled diabetic. Jim was uninsured and qualified for the Methodist Healthcare Ministries (MHM) Diabetic Education and Supplies Program. Through the MHM program, the Wesley Nurse provides patients with a free glucometer, and monthly diabetic supplies, such as strips and lancets. The patient also has to agree to attend monthly diabetic classes given by the Wesley Nurse.

At the first Wesley Nurse visit, Jim stated his A1C blood level was 13. The American Diabetic Association recommends an A1C of 7 or below.

At the first visit, Jim told the nurse he didn't want to change his eating habits. The Wesley Nurse listened as Jim expressed his anger, fear, and concerns about having to give up everything just to live. The Wesley Nurse asked Jim what he liked to eat. She made a list and assisted Jim in making a daily menu from the list. Jim was very surprised that he could manage his blood sugars by counting carbohydrates and watching his portion sizes. At the end of the visit, Jim was smiling.

After the first visit, the Wesley Nurse called Jim several times just to chat. Jim always welcomed the calls and enjoyed sharing what he was eating. Jim admitted he didn't always check his blood sugars, so he really couldn't tell her what it was.

During a recent call, Jim was excited to tell the Wesley Nurse his latest A1C was 7.6. Jim stated he now feels he has the confidence and knowledge to manage his diabetes.

The Family Community Health Center and the Wesley Nurse are working together to help Jim and others in Elgin to achieve their goals of living healthier lives through integrated health care.