

# Diabetes and Lancaster County

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Palmetto Tri-county Internal  
Medicine Practice  
Lancaster, South Carolina

Michael Kimbrell, MD

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# Problem

- There is a 13% prevalence rate of diabetes in the United States. Diabetes is a major healthcare concern in the Lancaster community. Julie Bowers, RN, has recently been assigned the task of organizing a program to improve the healthcare needs of the diabetic population at Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice.

# Aim

- To improve the management and treatment of the diabetic patients at the Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice.

# Measures

- Number and percentage of patients with diabetes at Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice.
- Number and percentage of patients with diabetes at Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice who have not been to see their physician in over a one year period.
- Number and percentage of HbA1c tests ordered for patients seen in 1999.

# Change for improvement

- Create a database of patients with diabetes.

# PDSA Cycle, #1

## ■ Plan

- Billing office generated list of diabetic patients with name, date of visits and lab tests ordered.

## ■ Do

- I counted the number of patients and compared them to the total number of charts found in the file room.
- I counted the number of patients seen in 1999 and subtracted them from the total number of diabetic patients; I then calculated the percentage of patients not seen in 1999 per total number of diabetic patients.

# PDSA Cycle, #1 continued

## ■ Study

- Palmetto Tri-county Internal medicine Practice has a patient population of approximately 5000. Approximately 1000 or 20% of their patients are diabetic. Approximately 550 or 55% of these patients have not been to see their physician in over a year.

## ■ Act

- Provide database and study results to Julie Bowers, who will generate notification letter for patients not seen in appropriate return time. Create flow sheet to monitor patient visits; study HbA1c tests ordered in 1999.

# PDSA Cycle, #2

## ■ Plan

- Utilize database to determine the number and percentage of HbA1c tests ordered in 1999.

## ■ Do

- I counted the number of tests ordered in 1999 and calculated the percentage of HbA1c tests ordered per the total number of diabetic patients billed in the year of 1999.

# PDSA Cycle, #2

## ■ Study

- There were approximately 230 HbA1c tests ordered for approximately 450 patients seen in 1999; therefore, only 51% received a HbA1c test to monitor their diabetes.

## ■ Act

- Inform Dr. Kimbrell & Julie Bowers of results to support ordering more HbA1c's for diabetic patients at Palmetto Tri-county I.M. Practice.

# Lessons learned

- Diabetes truly is a major healthcare concern in Lancaster community as represented by the diabetic population at Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice.
- The results of this project justify the need to improve the treatment and management of these patients.
- The program assigned to Julie Bowers should prove worthwhile by addressing these needs.
- Notification letters and ordering HbA1c tests should improve management and treatment of the diabetic patients at the Palmetto Tri-county Internal Medicine Practice.