

*A quarterly update on events and stories about Family First Health and the communities we serve.*



## Medical Outcomes: Addressing Health Disparities to Improve Quality of Life

### National Recognition for Improving Blood Pressure Control

Family First Health participates in the American Heart Association and American Medical Association **Target: BP™** initiative to educate patients on maintaining healthy blood pressure. Based on initial screenings, our centers distribute at-home blood pressure monitoring kits to patients and provide instruction on their use. This effort increases patient awareness during subsequent visits and follow-ups, leading to improvements in overall health outcomes.

In **2023** Columbia Medical, Hannah Penn and Hanover Centers achieved **Gold+** status for demonstrating a commitment to measure accuracy and having 70% or more of adult patients with high blood pressure controlled. Our Gettysburg, George Street, Lebanon, and Lewisberry Centers earned **Silver** status recognition for demonstrating a commitment to improving blood pressure control through measurement accuracy.



*Improving the health and quality of life for all is fundamental to the mission of Family First Health. This goal is at the core of providing health care and medical services that result in successful outcomes for all of our community members.*

**Measuring the success of services and resulting outcomes** provides health care professionals and organizations with invaluable information that can be used to provide patients with appropriate and effective care. State and national health organizations, like the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), provide Family First Health with key medical and dental quality measures. Diabetes, tobacco use and smoking cessation, depression, breast cancer and colorectal cancer screening, pediatric tooth decay, and prenatal care are among the areas of focus for tracking and reporting outcomes.

However, health disparities - differences in health care affected by race, ethnicity, gender, income, and access to care - can impact the overall success of these outcomes. Family First Health, with our coordinated, comprehensive health care model, focuses on caring for the whole individual, recognizing and addressing these disparities in our every day work.

By evaluating state and national metrics, reviewing related trends in our own patient data, and considering costs to implement and anticipated outcome success, we determine which quality measures to prioritize that can be most impactful for our patients.

During 2023 we focused on improving outcomes in five areas: colorectal cancer screening, A1C control for diabetes, statin therapy for prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease, screening of adults using the PRAPARE tool to assess risk based on social determinants of health, and fluoride treatment for pediatric patients.

To ensure progress toward achieving these outcomes, Family First Health utilizes a dedicated Quality Improvement Team. This cross-departmental group is responsible for evaluating, identifying, and putting in place systems and evidence-based processes designed to improve the care and quality of life for our patients and our community.

# Making a Difference: Improving Outcomes and Quality of Care for People Living with Diabetes



The A1C test – also known as the hemoglobin A1C or HbA1c test – is a simple blood test that measures your average blood sugar levels over the past 3 months. It's one of the commonly used tests to diagnose prediabetes and diabetes, and is also the main test to help you and your health care team manage your diabetes.

Of the five quality measures identified in 2023 as priorities by Family First Health to address disparities and improve overall health in the communities we serve, **A1C control for the management of diabetes demonstrated the most improvement.** At the end of 2023, only 24% of our patients did not have good control of their A1C, surpassing our goal for the year of 25% and our outcome of 27% for 2022 (lower is better). Additionally, our results were better than those for similar communities measured at the state (31%) and national (30%) levels.

**A1C information is necessary** to determine appropriate treatment and care for individuals with diabetes. Instead of relying on a trip to the lab, Family First Health is able to test and obtain results at point of care during the medical visit. This reduces or eliminates barriers for testing, including transportation, cost, and language, and can expedite and improve the outcomes of referrals for specialty care or surgery.

**Screening for A1C at point of care** – during initial screening and subsequent visits and follow-ups – gives the provider and patient real-time access to important information for better, more immediate conversations about managing and controlling diabetes. In turn, the practice team is able to address a treatment plan and related behavior changes with the patient that can result in improved health outcomes. Both the care team and the patient are empowered with greater flexibility in making decisions about and controlling diabetes.

**Dr. Hetal Patel**, a provider at the George Street Center and lead for the Quality Improvement Team, has a special clinical interest in diabetes treatment and control. She has seen firsthand the positive effect that putting in place preventative quality measures, like A1C testing, can have on the overall health of individuals and our communities, as well as the success of a practice team in coordinating and managing patient care. One of Dr. Patel's patients was able to realign basics of everyday living – sleeping and walking – once she was able to control her A1C. In addition, Dr. Patel and her team were better able to diagnose and prepare a treatment plan for the patient's depression.



## Perspectives and Notes

"The value of quality outcomes on patient health and well-being cannot be underestimated. It's clear that quality of care directly impacts quality of life." – Hetal Patel, MD, MPH, Physician, Family First Health

"A successful health outcome empowers a patient to take control of their own care and the care of others in their family. They are able to engage in meaningful activities of daily living, like going to church or celebrating the accomplishment of a love one." – Meg Wheeler, Vice President, Operations & Quality, Family First Health

"The beauty of the work we do to improve quality of care and health outcomes at Family First Health is that it is an organized and intentional collaboration of our departments and care teams so that we are meeting people where they are. We aim to continuously improve our workflows, digital tools, and communication while simultaneously understanding and addressing the unique patient needs that address whole-person health." – Richa Leitzell, Director of Quality and Corporate Compliance, Family First Health

# Why I Give: Donor Spotlight

## Meet Dr. Bell

Dr. Debra Bell knows a few things about the challenges people face when it comes to dealing with the health care system. Working as a family care physician in a York primary care practice, she saw and experienced on a daily basis the importance of access to affordable, quality health care, as well as the impact of health disparities faced by members of the community in which she lived.

It was during her private practice-based work that she learned about Family First Health, and was immediately drawn to the mission and an opportunity to bring her skills and shared passion for helping improve the lives of others to our George Street Center. Dr. Bell was instrumental in developing our substance use support services, serving as Medical Director of our Center for Excellence.

The trajectory of her career path has now taken her to one of our regional health systems. In her current role, she is using her experiences to research ways to partner with community-based health care organizations, like Family First Health, to identify and implement innovative solutions that address disparities and expand the impact of health outcomes.

When asked why she chooses to support us, Dr. Bell shared that her heart continues to be with the daily impact that Family First Health has on the health and well-being of our patients. And the way she sees it, we are “at the heart” of health care in the communities we serve!

## Thank you, Dr. Bell. We continue to make a difference because of you!

*Debra Bell, MD currently works as Medical Director of Population Health Services for WellSpan Health, and has been a loyal donor since 2014. She continues to maintain a medical home with Family First Health.*



*Dr. Bell is passionate about the role Family First Health brings to community-focused care.*

## SAVE THE DATE: GIVE LOCAL YORK IS MAY 2-3, 2024!

*Mark your calendars for York County's biggest 24-hour day of giving to support the impact of non-profits like Family First Health.*

## Your gift can make a difference.

### Ways to Give:

- **Check:** Mail your check, payable to *Family First Health*, to:  
Development, Family First Health, 116 S. George Street, York PA 17401
- **Credit Card:** Make your secure donation online via our web site at:  
[www.familyfirsthealth.org/donate](http://www.familyfirsthealth.org/donate)
- **Consider a recurring monthly gift.** Make your support have ongoing impact with an automated credit card contribution.

### Questions?

Contact David Corman, Manager of Donor Relations, at 717-801-4850 or [dcorman@familyfirsthealth.org](mailto:dcorman@familyfirsthealth.org)



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# FAMILYFIRST HEALTH

## Our Mission

### WHAT WE DO

We improve lives; in **big ways** and **small ways**. From high quality health services and innovative partnerships to daily acts of compassion. In all ways, **we work together** to improve lives.

## Our Vision

### WHY WE DO IT

*From healthcare to health for all*

**Closing** the gap  
**Paving** the way  
**Raising** the bar

## Our Values

### WHAT GUIDES US

Patient Centered  
Collaborative  
Diverse  
Stewardship  
Evolving

**Columbia (Dental)**  
430 Walnut St., Ste. 101  
Columbia, PA 17512  
717.356.2233

**George Street**  
116 S. George St.  
York, PA 17401  
717.845.8617

**Hannah Penn**  
415 E. Boundary Ave.  
York, PA 17403  
717.843.5174

**Lebanon**  
300 Willow St., Ent. B  
Lebanon, PA 17046  
717.356.2222

**Columbia (Medical)**  
369 Locust St.  
Columbia, PA 17512  
717.342.2577

**Gettysburg**  
1275 York Rd., Ste. 17  
Gettysburg, PA 17325  
717.337.9400

**Hanover**  
1230 High St.  
Hanover, PA 17331  
717.632.9052

**Lewisberry**  
308 Market St.  
Lewisberry, PA 17339  
717.938.6695



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