



Compass PTN – Innovation in Action

Primary Health Care, Des Moines

Goals

1. Develop a program focused on wellness and prevention.
2. Build a therapeutic garden with edible landscaping.
3. Plan and organize a community partnership.

Challenges

- Funding
- Avoiding duplication of services or programs already available
- Determining the needs and wants of the community

Solution

Primary Health Care will continue to nourish the strong community relationships already in place to help build a program that will address the needs of the community.

Primary Health Care (PHC) is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) dedicated to providing a full array of health care services to the underserved in the Des Moines and surrounding areas.

Dr. Bery Engebretsen, Chief Medical Officer at PHC, recognizes that the method of providing healthcare in this country is backward, with most of our time and money being spent fixing health problems after they occur. In an effort to move the focus upstream to promote health and wellness in our community, PHC is creating a Wellness Center.

The Wellness Center will have three components:

1. Education Center
2. Therapeutic Garden
3. Community Involvement

“It is my personal feeling that healthcare is backward. Billions of dollars are spent fixing problems after they occur and way too little is spent on prevention and wellness. It is time to make inroads upstream to address our healthcare issues.”

Dr. Bery Engebretsen

Education Center

PHC owns a small building and adjacent land near their eastside clinic. They were able to remodel the building through a Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) grant to create an education center. The education center has a kitchen with a large island that will accommodate a modest size group, a living room area with a small seating area, and a private room for wellness exams. This building will host activities that include cooking classes, diabetes group visits, and support groups.

Annual Wellness Visits will be scheduled at the education center and provided by a primary care provider. A community health worker and a

behavioral health consultant will also staff the Wellness Center allowing for warm handoffs for patients who need extra support to address mental health needs and/or social determinants of health challenges. Nurse Care Managers are available remotely to assist patients as needed.

Therapeutic Garden

The therapeutic garden will include raised beds, edible landscaping, a walking path, and areas to sit and enjoy nature. The garden will be open to the community and the Des Moines Area Religious Council's (DMARC) mobile food pantry will be scheduled to operate from the parking lot.

Dr. Engebretsen envisions inviting the community in for cooking classes which would include taking couple of laps around the garden walking path to gather some healthy food or herbs to use in the recipe. He will also initiate a 'Walk with a Doc' (<https://walkwithadoc.org/>) program which would offer the community an opportunity for health education and exercise.

Community Involvement

Lastly, PHC continues to nourish the close ties that it has with the community and is partnering with neighborhood associations, community organizations, and key political groups. Through this partnership they will plan and organize a community advisory council to help assure that the Wellness Center meets the community needs.

Dr. Engebretsen emphasizes the desire to avoid spending time and money duplicating services that already exist. For example, PHC considered building a large community garden but realized that other community gardens were present in the area and the DMARC food pantry could provide a greater quantity of healthy foods more economically.

Program Actualization

Funding for a program like this is always a challenge. PHC has utilized grants in the planning stages of this initiative. Reimbursement from billable preventative services such as Annual Wellness Visits, Chronic Care Management, Advance Care Planning, and Behavioral Health Integration services will help continue to keep the program going.

To evaluate the success of the program, PHC will track data including BMI and A1Cs, participation rates, satisfaction surveys, and financial data.

PHC will be posting the job opening for a community health worker in July and plans to have the Wellness Center up and running by the end of the summer. They will continue to improve their grounds and build the program as grant funding comes through.

Compass PTN Partnership

PHC has been an engaged participant with Compass PTN and has taken advantage of process improvement support, LEAN application training, health coach training, utilization of i2i Population Health Database, and support with strategic planning.

