Investing in Clinical Pharmacists at Community Health Centers Can Significantly Improve Patient Outcomes, Advance Health Equity

Study shows patients with personalized pharmacist-led medication management programs at federally qualified health centers effectively managed complex chronic disease and lowered risk of death by 20%

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J. (July 19, 2022) — Recent research published in the *Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy* shows that investments made in clinical pharmacist-led patient care can substantially improve health measures in low-income patients facing a debilitating chronic disease.

The paper, titled *The impact of clinical pharmacist-led comprehensive medication management on diabetes care at Federally Qualified Health Centers within the BD Helping Build Healthy Communities program,* describes a study commissioned by BD (Becton, Dickinson and Company), a leading global medical technology company, along with Direct Relief and the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC), which found that **patients enrolled in a comprehensive medication management program at federally qualified health centers (FQHC) saw their Hemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) scores decrease by 1.2% in six months — equating to an estimated20% lower risk of death[1].**

The study analyzed clinical pharmacy approaches at eight federally qualified health centers that received funding through the **BD Helping Build Healthy Communities™** grant initiative, which was established in 2013, and funded by BD and the BD Foundation, and implemented by Direct Relief and NACHC in order to support comprehensive medication management services for low-income patients. Clinics were evaluated for two years and included awardees from 2017, 2018 and 2019.

"It's easy to prescribe medication, but to actually maximize the benefit that the patient gets from that medication requires comprehensive medication management that goes beyond the typical 15-minute provider visit," said Dr. Sonak Pastakia from Purdue University School of Pharmacy, lead author of the study. "We found that when patients review their diagnosis and coinciding medications with a team, led by a clinical pharmacist, as well as social workers and behavioral health specialists, the health outcome of their chronic disease improve beyond what is seen in a typical clinical visit."

FQHCs are community-based providers that receive funding under the Public Health Service Act in order to provide primary care services in underserved areas and often work under significant budget constraints despite caring for nearly 30 million patients annually, 67% of whom earn an income below the federal poverty line[2]. Because standard Medicaid coverage does not often reimburse health care providers for novel programs like comprehensive medication management, non-federal funding sources like philanthropic investments are instrumental in helping health centers care for vulnerable patient populations. This is especially true of people living with diabetes as a 1% drop in their average blood sugar over 3 months (i.e., glycosylated hemoglobin [HbA1c]) can save the health care system an estimated $685 to $950 annually per patient, while also reducing the risk of serious longer-term health issues[3].

Damon Taugher, vice president of Global Programs at Direct Relief and a co-author of the paper, said, "This study goes a long way toward proving the hypothesis that underpins the *BD Helping Build Healthy Communities* program — that investing in health centers positively impacts clinical outcomes for patients."

Jennifer Farrington senior director of BD social investing and vice president of the BD Foundation, added, "We launched the *BD Helping Build Healthy Communities* program with Direct Relief and NACHC nearly a decade ago to address the disparity in which health care was being provided to vulnerable patients and populations across our health systems. We partnered with community health centers in high-need areas of the U.S. to help enable them to provide culturally relevant care that meets the needs of their patients and their community. As part of our ongoing commitment to building stronger, more resilient communities, we will continue to serve as a valued partner to community health centers as we work toward advancing access to equitable health care."

Chief Medical Officer of NACHC, Ron Yee, said, "Nationwide, we see the successful results of this collaboration with Community Health Centers in the field. Pharmacists work with each patient through face-to-face visits, telehealth, patient education, medication management, addressing medication access concerns through the discount 340B drug program and monitoring, and providing follow-up in collaboration with the primary care provider. Health centers are caring for increasing numbers of patients who are older and suffering from multiple chronic health conditions. Medication management is essential

to improving their health and lowering the risk of hospitalization."

Read the full paper: The impact of clinical pharmacist-led comprehensive medication management on diabetes care at Federally Qualified Health Centers within the *BD Helping Build Healthy Communities* program - Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy

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[1] Evaluated decreases are clinic average gains and are an important first step to better informing integrated patient management programs with the goal of mitigating consequences of life threatening chronic diseases at the patient level.

[2] Federally Qualified Health Centers Health Resources & Services Administration [cited 2021 Mar 28]. Available from: https://www.hrsa.gov/tools/opa/eligibility-and-registration/health-centers/fqhc/index.html

[3] Wagner EH, Sandhu N, Newton KM, McCulloch DK, Ramsey SD, Grothaus LC. Effect of improved glycemic control on health care costs and utilization. JAMA. 2001;285(2):182–189.https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.285.2.182

About BD

BD is one of the largest global medical technology companies in the world and is advancing the world of health by improving medical discovery, diagnostics and the delivery of care. The company supports the heroes on the frontlines of health care by developing innovative technology, services and solutions that help advance both clinical therapy for patients and clinical process for health care providers. BD and its 75,000 employees have a passion and commitment to help enhance the safety and efficiency of clinicians' care delivery process, enable laboratory scientists to accurately detect disease and advance researchers' capabilities to develop the next generation of diagnostics and therapeutics. BD has a presence in virtually every country and partners with organizations around the world to address some of the most challenging global health issues. By working in close collaboration with customers, BD can help enhance outcomes, lower costs, increase efficiencies, improve safety and expand access to health care. For more information on BD, please visit bd.com or connect with us on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/bd1/ and Twitter @BDandCo.

About Direct Relief
A humanitarian organization committed to improving the health and lives of people affected by poverty and emergencies, Direct Relief delivers lifesaving medical resources throughout the U.S. and world to communities in need—without regard to politics, religion, or ability to pay. For more information, visit https://www.DirectRelief.org.

About NACHC
The National Association of Community Health Centers was founded in 1971, with a mission to promote the provision of high quality, comprehensive and affordable health care that is coordinated, culturally and linguistically competent, and community-directed for all medically underserved populations. NACHC is the membership organization for community health centers nationwide, which provide primary and preventive health care to over to 28 million people from more than 10,000 sites. www.nachc.org.

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