

The Diabetes Equity Project

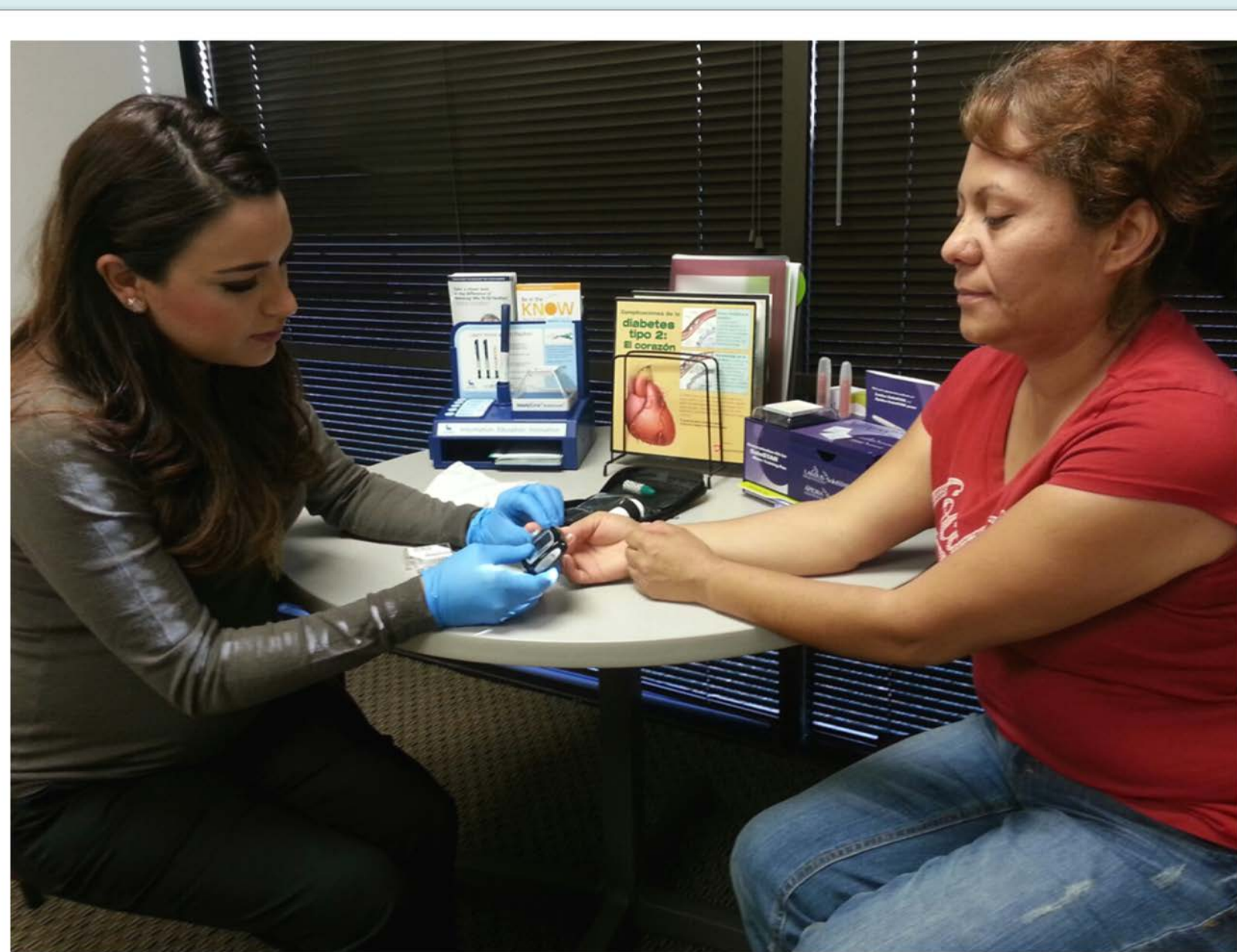
Baylor Health Care System (BHCS) in Dallas, Texas, created the Diabetes Equity Project (DEP), with funding from a Merck Company Foundation grant.

- **Goal:** reduce observed disparities in diabetes care and diabetes outcomes in the medically underserved communities surrounding BHCS hospitals.
- **Intervention:** the implementation of specially trained, bilingual community health workers (CHWs) with the job title “Diabetes Health Promoter” (DHP).
- **Results:** preliminary analysis revealed that participating patients had a statistically significant reduction in mean glycated hemoglobin (HbA1c) levels one year post-baseline.

Diabetes Health Promoters

CHWs serve as culturally-tailored and linguistically-appropriate liaisons to the patient-provider relationship and increasing access to health services and education.

- The DEP features DHPs who deliver a structured diabetes education curriculum targeting barriers to diabetes management that Hispanics commonly experience in a series of 7 sessions.



Role of the DHP

Within the clinic, the DHP helps patient overcome various educational deficits that are sources of poor diabetes control and worsening health such as:

- Lack of knowledge about diabetes
- Lack of social support, poor diets, insufficient physical activity
- Limited access to care

The DHP also serves as a source of social support that allows patients to create a trusting relationship with the DHPs and to be open and honest about the problems the patients face in managing their diabetes.

“Education...that’s the piece that everyone needs to be successful in managing diabetes. It’s really difficult for our patients to get access to [diabetes] education.”

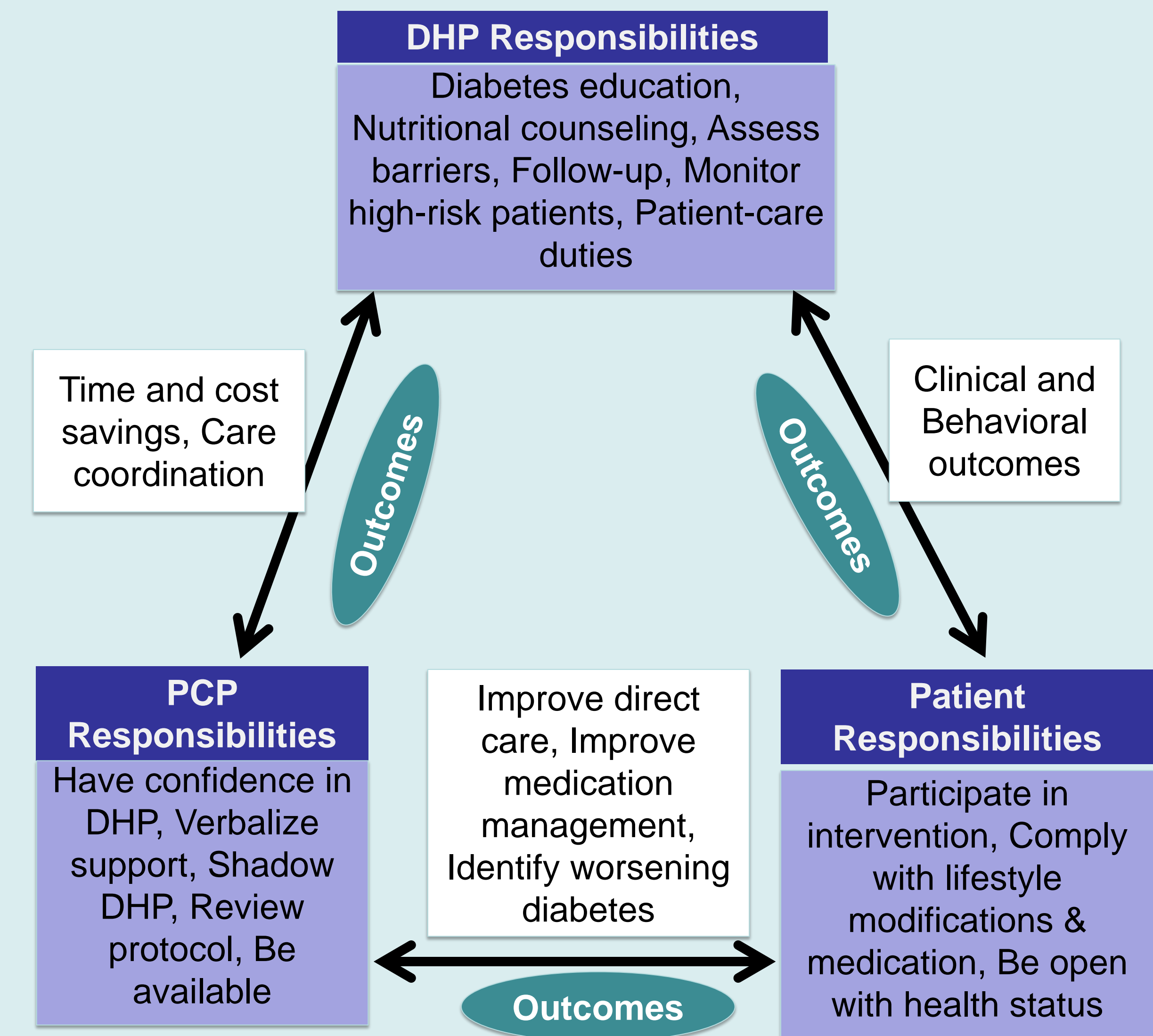
-Erin Sanders, NP at a participating DEP clinic

DHP Education Strategies

The DHPs use various strategies to promote patient understanding and management of diabetes. The education is structured in a way that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for the largely Hispanic population the DEP serves. **Educational tools include:**

- **Visual aids:** using food plates that demonstrate proper portion size and healthy food options
- **Medication support:** helping patients understand how to access medication and stay compliant; use of pill boxes to understand proper doses
- **Time:** spending sufficient time with patients to ensure their comprehension of diabetes management

Incorporating DHPs into Clinical Care



Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The DEP is a low-cost, high-quality model for the delivery of patient care to underserved populations that blends care coordination services and disease-specific patient education for patients. The use of DHPs as part of the clinical team to support diabetes education efforts for patients has proven to be a successful intervention in improving diabetes outcomes in the clinics involved in the DEP intervention.

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