



Diabetes Education Program Graduates Recognized

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Alton, IL – Lewis and Clark Community College (L&C), in partnership with Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation (SIHF), recognized 72 diabetic patients last week for their participation in educational sessions about diabetes and diabetes care.

As a collaborative effort between the Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic, a nurse managed center, and SIHF Alton Health Center, patients attended a nine month program held at the SIHF Alton Health Center to learn more about the disease, diet, cooking, exercise, and lifestyle factors. Education sessions were lead by Lewis and Clark Family Health Clinic staff and other medical professionals. Most patients were paired with a Lewis and Clark nursing student, who served as a coach and educator throughout the program.

Presentations included information and discussion about medication usage, how carbohydrates affect diabetes, as well as other health topics. Patients also received educational materials during the program to help them identify and track their progress. Donna Oehler, Alton Health Center Manager, saw many positive results from this program.

“The program participants were grateful for the opportunity to learn more about the disease and be linked to resources to better manage their care,” stated Oehler. “Through this long term educational program, and the support of the nursing students, patients were able to apply what they learned and see outcomes.”

Together, SIHF and L&C were one of 12 projects selected from 180 applicants nationwide for this initiative, funded by a grant from the Kresge Foundation, a private, national foundation, headquartered in Troy, Mich. It was through a survey of 900

community members in the Alton region that determined the need for this health education initiative. Donna Meyer, L&C dean of Health Sciences and project director of the clinic, felt it was a valuable experience for both the patients and nursing students.

“This was an important initiative to assist patients to understand more about the disease process of diabetes. Nearly 11 percent of the population in Madison County is confronted with diabetes. Our nursing students learned valuable information about the effects of the disease on the patients, and we plan to continue the education model on its own in the future to benefit diabetes patients as well as the nursing students,” Meyer said.

In addition to treating diabetic patients, the Alton Health Center offers adult medicine, pediatrics and behavioral health services for the entire family. The center is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Most private insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, and Allkids are accepted. A sliding fee scale is available for uninsured patients. For more information or to make an appointment, call 618-463-5905.

About Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation

Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation is a community-based, Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) Network, comprised of nearly 40 health centers in 8 counties in Southern Illinois. In 2011, SIHF had 101,103 patients and provided 315,791 outpatient visits. Health center services include Family Practice, Obstetrics/Gynecology, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Dental, and Behavioral Health.

About Lewis and Clark Community College

Lewis and Clark’s Family Health Clinic opened in 2007 and is the first and only one of its kind in the nation operated by a community college. In 2008, the clinic received the Illinois Rural Health Association Special Exemplary Project Award. In 2009 the clinic was recognized by the Illinois Nurses Association with the Innovation in Healthcare Access Award for its development and implementation of an innovative model of healthcare delivery that has increased access and promoted high quality, cost-effective healthcare and exemplified the association’s purpose to improve health standards and influence the delivery of quality healthcare services for all people. The clinic was also recognized in 2009 with the Innovation Award by the Illinois Council of Community College Administrators. In July 2009, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded the clinic an additional \$882,000 grant for its operation over the next three years. In 2010 the clinic received the national MetLife Award for Innovation. In addition to providing healthcare to thousands of clients each year, the clinic has developed and maintained partnerships with local school districts, county governments, health departments, community health organizations and other public service agencies.

