



Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force Formed to Highlight the Needs of Underserved Patients
Leading Patient Advocates, Experts, Institutions, and Research Innovators Join to Promote Equitable and Comprehensive Diabetes Care

Sustainable Healthy Communities (SHC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Minority Quality Forum (NMQF)—one of the nation’s leading advocates for health equity—has partnered with some of the nation’s leading advocacy groups, experts, academic institutions, and innovators to promote equitable, community-based and patient-centered care for those suffering from diabetes, co-morbid illness, and inadequate access and resources.

Although diabetes is widely discussed by policy makers and medical leaders alike, the outsized impact of diabetes on people of color and the poor is often lost in the debate. Our analysis of the Medicare fee-for-service program—through which 40 percent of individuals with diabetes are served—shows that: 80 percent of people living with diabetes reside in less than 1/4th of U.S. zip codes, more than half of which are minority majority, that is more than 50 percent of the resident population are non-white. NMQF Founder, CEO, and President, Dr. Gary Puckrein observes that “these patients disproportionately face challenges accessing health care, live at or near the poverty level, and suffer co-morbid heart and kidney disease, experiencing repeated hospitalizations, imposing tremendous costs, and ultimately shortened lifespans.”

“Diabetes in underserved and vulnerable populations produces a vicious cycle of emergency room use, expensive hospitalization, a disconnect from ambulatory care and social supports, nonadherence to effective therapies and monitoring, and concomitant disease,” laments SHC Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President, Dr. Laura Lee Hall, “leading to increasing levels of disease and suffering for the patient, and cost to society.” Dr. Bernard Rosof, CEO and President of SHC asserts that “the dilemma of the underserved patient with diabetes is the epitome of unsustainability and opposes the very definition of patient-centered, health-literate, community- and evidence-based, compassionate care. It’s neither professionally nor morally acceptable.”

Health care leaders’ shared sense of urgency led to the creation of the Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force. Corporate Working Group chair Mr. Bruce T. Taylor, a Dexcom executive and diabetes patient himself, decries the unacceptable irony of “living and working in an era of incredible innovation in medicines and technologies that can enhance both the length and quality of life for people with diabetes, yet some of the patients most in need do not have access or support. Dexcom’s participation in the Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force signals our commitment to promoting optimal outcomes for all patients with diabetes.”

Long-time diabetes researcher, clinician, and advocate Dr. Jaime Davidson co-leads the SHC working group and commends the focus on underserved and diverse populations. “Too many people of color, immigrants, and the poor are deprived of even basic medical care, leaving them in the shadows until they turn up at our hospitals with their disease out of control,” says Davidson. “It is our duty to reach out to these populations in the community and prevent the downward spiral that ends with amputation, heart disease, and kidney failure.”

The Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force will focus producing an up-to-date diabetes index mapping data on: patient demographic and clinical characteristics and diagnoses; health care access and utilization including medications, ambulatory care, ER use and hospitalizations, and costs; and social determinants of health. Visualization of diabetes footprint across the nation can help guide resource allocation as well as support communities in doing their own diabetes community assessment.

The group also is supporting a pilot program in Brooklyn, NY, in collaboration with regional partners the State University of New York (SUNY)-Downstate Medical Center, School of Public Health, and Nursing School, and the Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health. The effort will train and support primary care providers and community leaders to promote patient-centered diabetes care that better connects the at-risk patients with ambulatory care and needed social supports. Dr. Wayne J. Riley, president of SUNY Downstate Medical Center and President Emeritus of the American College of Physicians, summarizes the importance of the initiative in “bringing a sustainable approach to helping the Brooklyn population achieve better health outcomes. SUNY Downstate Medical Center is committed to making the care, training, and research we deliver serve our community, as this project will.” Organizational and expert members of the Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force are listed in the table below. To learn more about our efforts or to become a member contact jlouis@shcllc.info.

Expert Members of the Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force	
Chair - Jaime A. Davidson, MD Clinical Professor of Medicine Touchstone Diabetes Center The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center	James R. Gavin III, MD, PhD CEO and Chief Medical Officer of Healing Our Village, Inc Clinical Professor of Medicine, Emory University School of Medicine
Marie T. Brown, MD Associate Professor, Rush Medical College Senior Physician Advisor, Physician Satisfaction and Practice Sustainability Group American Medical Association	David Marrero, PhD Director of the Center for Health disparities Research University of Arizona Health Sciences
A. Enrique Caballero, MD Harvard Medical School Founder, Latino Diabetes Initiative Joslin Diabetes Center	Anna Norton, MS CEO DiabetesSisters
John D. Couk, MD Chief Medical Officer, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine Louisiana State University Health Care Services Division	Christopher G. Parkin President, CGParkin Communications, Inc.
Keith C. Ferdinand, MD Professor of Medicine Tulane Heart and Vascular Institute Tulane University School of Medicine	Gloria A. Wilder, MD Vice President, Centene Corporation
Corporate Members of the Diabetes Working Group and Equity Task Force	
AstraZeneca	Merck
Centene	Novo Nordisk
Dexcom	Sanofi
Eli Lilly and Company	

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