

ACP Extends, Expands Diabetes Care Initiative

BY JANE ANDERSON
Contributing Writer

WASHINGTON — The American College of Physicians, building on a successful 3-year initiative to improve diabetes care among medical practices, will extend the initiative by 2 years and expand it to 1,000 physician practices, the group said.

The new phase of the initiative, funded by a \$4.2 million grant from Novo Nordisk Inc. and run jointly by the ACP and the ACP Foundation (ACPF), will create a Web-based version of the "Closing the Gap" diabetes program.

Closing the Gap aims to increase physician awareness of high-quality diabetes care and the gap between current practice and acceptable standards, to provide proven educational interventions for im-



The Web portal for the Closing the Gap program will be able to reach more practices, said Dr. Vincenza Snow (with Dr. Nathaniel G. Clark of Novo Nordisk).

proving care to the entire diabetes team, and to recognize physicians and physician practices that improve the care of patients with diabetes.

In the first phase, the program provided in-person training sessions for 19 practice teams with 60 office members caring for a total of 1,300 patients. The hope is that the new, Web-based version of the training program will be able to reach more practices and still be as effective as the expensive, labor-intensive live training, said Dr. Vincenza Snow, director of clinical programs and quality of care at ACP.

"We, for the first time, designed an initiative aimed at teaching practice teams," Dr. Snow said at a briefing held at the ACP's annual meeting. "The main point of the initiative was to change practice behavior," especially in the areas of patient self-management, diet, and behavior change, she said.

In its first 3 years, the ACP and ACPF diabetes initiative offered educational tools and practice-based, team-oriented training for physicians, patients, and health care teams. According to the ACP, the initiative resulted in statistically significant improvements on many clinical measures, such as a nearly 50% decrease in the average number of days between patient office visits for diabetes (from 115 days to 58), a 40% increase in the number of patients who received annual urine albumin testing, a 62% increase in the number who un-

derwent annual dilated eye exams (from 29% to 47%), and a 100% increase in patients who had influenza vaccinations (from 26% to 52%).

To date, the ACP and ACPF have distributed more than 500,000 patient guides and more than 80,000 clinical care guides, both of which emphasize a team-based approach to diabetes care.

In addition, since the launch of the project's diabetes portal in June 2007 (diabetes.acponline.org), more than 20,000

users have visited the site for an average of 75,000 page hits per week. Dr. Snow noted that 20% of ACP's membership has visited the portal so far. The most popular content includes slides and audio files from ACP's annual meetings, information about drug therapy, and tools to help practices implement team-based care.

Denmark-based Novo Nordisk, the pharmaceutical company that first offered insulin commercially, funded the initial 3-year educational effort with an unrestricted

educational grant of \$9.27 million.

The new phase of the initiative will broaden the project to other primary care providers. Dr. Snow said that the initiative's Diabetes Advisory Board has been expanded to include members from the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, and others. Family physicians are welcome to participate in the new, Web-based version of the practice-based training, she added. ■

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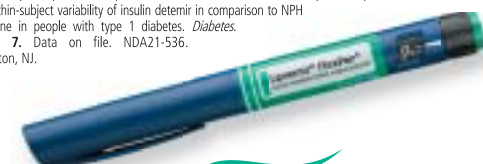
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