

Senior Husband and Wife Praise Diabetes Self-Management Workshops

When senior married couple Mary and Paul called to thank the AQIN-South Carolina (SC) quality improvement team for helping them manage their diabetes, we asked if we could share their story.

Mary and Paul graduated from AQIN's free, five-week workshop held in Bluffton, SC, which is part of the national *Everyone with Diabetes Counts* initiative sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The workshops help participants build critical self-management skills. Workshops are led by Celia Beauchamp, a diabetes self-management expert. For information on class locations and schedule, call 1-800-922-3089, ext. 7585.

- How did you hear about the program?

“We heard about it from our primary care physician; she gave us a flyer and told us we needed to attend the classes. We are new to the area. Paul has a family history of diabetes – mother, sister and grandfather. Paul had a 20 year history of abnormal blood sugars. He worked in the dairy business and had put on a lot of extra weight. Once he lost weight using Weight Watchers®, his blood sugars went back into normal range.”

Paul said he hadn't thought much about his diabetes until he moved to South Carolina in the fall of 2016. His new doctor re-opened the discussion about pre-diabetes and diabetes. Paul told the doctor that he did not have diabetes but she encouraged him to come to the class to be educated about it anyway. Mary also was advised that her blood sugars were abnormal and after a recent visit to cardiac rehabilitation, their doctor encouraged her to attend the class along with Paul. Mary and Paul report that one of their grown sons has also been diagnosed with pre-diabetes.

- How has this program made a difference in your life? What do you know now that you did not know before?

“It has made us more vigilant about watching what we eat and the amount of food we eat. We have become more vigilant about what we put in our system. Celia didn’t say we had to stop eating certain foods but she did make us aware of what could happen if we didn’t manage our blood sugars. We learned a lot about the relationship between diabetes and other health issues like heart disease and stroke.

We look carefully for added sugars in food, using the food label. One thing Celia did in class was to hold up a cup of sugar and tell us that was the amount of added sugar in 20 ounces of sweet tea. Paul’s Weight Watchers® leader had done a similar thing years ago. It made an impression on him then and made an impression on us now. We have stopped drinking orange juice and substituted whole fruit and Tropicana 20. We have cut out desserts and are reading the labels. We did not know how much added sugar there was in foods we were eating every day.”

Paul reports he is being more aware of how much he was eating versus how much he should have been eating. Mary said that the class has made her more aware of eating consistently throughout the day; this has allowed her to decrease her total food intake.

- Is your diabetes better controlled now?

“Paul is waiting to have his A1c done at the VA next month. His goal is to lower his A1c by two percent.” His sister was able to do this with lifestyle changes and he is confident he can too!

- Would you recommend the class/program to others?

“Yes!” Paul and Mary already have recommended the program to a neighbor. They praise the AQIN program and are sharing their experiences with their friends and neighbors.

- What is the best thing about attending and graduating from the program?

“Information sharing. We like the group setting. We were able to see and talk with others who had diabetes. We were also able to hear from others what happened when they made changes to improve their diabetes and to learn what could happen if we didn’t from others who attended.”

- What advice would you give to someone who is newly diagnosed with pre-diabetes or diabetes?

“No one wants to have diabetes. Change your diet because this can change the progression of the disease and the complications associated with it. You won’t know what benefit you will get from the class until you go. Sometimes you are hesitant about attending a first class but it is worth it. We really learned a lot!”

Free Diabetes Self-Management Workshops

Diabetes self-management education (DSME) is a proven intervention for empowering persons with diabetes to take an active role in controlling their disease. **We will work with you and your community to schedule and plan DSME training classes that last five to six weeks depending on the curriculum.**

For information, please contact the AQIN-South Carolina team at 1-800-922-3089, ext. 7585.

About Atlantic Quality Innovation Network (AQIN)

The Carolinas Center for Medical Excellence (CCME) is a member of the AQIN, a Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO), offering health care quality improvement learning opportunities, technical assistance, and resources across New York, South Carolina, and the District of Columbia. CCME serves as the QIN-QIO for South Carolina.