

The West Virginia Diabetes Advisory Committee Public Library Success Story

Problem:

Over 60% of West Virginia is defined as rural. People who are poor, undereducated and live in rural areas are more likely to have diabetes and experience negative diabetes outcomes. People living in rural communities often do not have access to current health information that can help them increase their health knowledge and ultimately better care for themselves and their families. In an attempt to disseminate current information to people with diabetes in West Virginia, the West Virginia Diabetes Prevention and Control Program (WV DPCP) contacted the West Virginia Library Commission to assess their needs for current diabetes literature. The two groups met to review the current diabetes resources available in the public libraries throughout the state. It was discovered that much of the diabetes literature in the public libraries throughout the state was outdated; however librarians in small, rural communities were hesitant to purge this material if there were no resources available to replace it with more current information.

Program:

Through the WV DPCP, The West Virginia Diabetes Advisory Committee chose to form a Library Committee to address the concern of outdated diabetes information in the state's public libraries. The Library Committee chose to allocate some resources to address this problem. From 2001-2006 the Library Committee has been able to place ten diabetes books and one DVD into all 173 public libraries in the state. The committee carefully selected titles for the project to ensure inclusion of information on a wide variety of topics such as general diabetes care, diet and nutrition, cooking, physical activity, empowerment, Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes, as well as diabetes for children and teens. The books were also chosen to appeal to those with a variety of literacy levels.

In, 2007 the Library Committee conducted a further needs assessment of six public libraries (both urban and rural). Through circulation records, it was determined that the diabetes material was being used by patrons and the committee chose to purchase two more books for all 173 libraries, bringing the total contribution to thirteen titles.

Impact:

The Library Committee has received many positive responses and letters of thanks from librarians who have expressed their gratitude for the resources that have been provided. Many librarians have displayed the new titles in designated area where they are easily viewed by patrons. Several librarians have also displayed the diabetes books in at the front of the library during the month of November (Diabetes Awareness Month). Many librarians have stated the donation of new titles have enabled them the purge older titles that contain outdated information and without the assistance of the WV DPCP and the West Virginia Diabetes Advisory Committee they would not have been able to offer these much-needed resources to their patrons.