

Toronto Central LHIN – August 16, 2010

## Supporting Vulnerable Populations with Diabetes Care

The Aging at Home strategy is designed to expand seniors' access to care options at home and in the community, and to create locally-driven approaches to enhance seniors' independence and health status. In 2009/2010, the Toronto Central LHIN invested \$15.4 million to support 22 initiatives through Aging at Home, including two diabetes outreach and screening programs. The prevention, management and treatment of diabetes is a key priority of the Toronto Central LHIN.

*"This program helps to raise awareness, teaches seniors how they can prevent further diabetes complications and take precautions to avoid the onset of diabetes."*

Maya Kandiah  
Former President, Senior Tamils Center

The South Asian Diabetes Prevention Program (SADPP) at Flemingdon Community Health Centre enhances access to diabetes prevention services for the South Asian communities in North East Toronto and offers language-specific and culturally relevant services that allow for early detection of diabetes. This program reaches out to the South Asian communities in Tamil, Farsi, Urdu, Gujarati, Hindi and Bengali. It is carried out in venues where community members regularly congregate such as mosques, temples, churches and community centres.

The SADPP team consists of a Registered Nurse, Registered Dietician, Project Coordinator, Project Manager and three outreach workers. A typical pre-diabetes-screening session involves three stations and a workshop: registration and initial assessment; taking measurements such as height, weight, etc.; blood/glucose level testing; and a workshop on healthy living by the Registered Dietician. In addition, follow-up workshops are scheduled with the same pre-screened group to ensure full-circle care. **So far, through SADPP, 944 people have been screened, 830 people have participated in workshops, and 144 seniors who are at risk of developing diabetes have been identified.** At-risk patients are referred to the Mid-Toronto diabetes clinic, while those patients without a family physician are provided resources to connect them to primary care.

"I thought it was important for me to come and check my blood/sugar. This is a very good service and it's systematically done. Sometimes this group of seniors doesn't have access to this type of service, so it's good to come here. Here I get a blood test, and they take all the measurements. You meet with a dietician and a nurse and then you go home and you feel better with the knowledge you need to lead a healthier life," said Kandiah Saravanapavan who attended a SADPP screening program.

The success of SADPP led to the creation of a second program in 2009/2010 called Live Free – Prevent Diabetes at New Heights Community Health Centre aimed at seniors within Toronto's Caribbean and Latin American communities. **So far, through Live Free – Prevent Diabetes, 687 people have been screened, 180 people have participated in workshops, and 270 seniors who are at risk of developing diabetes have been identified.** A third program is currently being planned for urban Aboriginal peoples.

### Quick Facts:

- 9.8 per cent of residents aged 20 years and older in the Toronto Central LHIN live with diabetes.
- Diabetes puts people at risk of significant disease and disability, including heart disease, stroke and end-stage kidney disease.
- Aboriginal people and people from Africa, Asia, Latin America and South Asia are at greater risk for diabetes.
- Diabetes is a priority in the Toronto Central LHINs 2010-2013 Integrated Health Services Plan. Highlights include developing a model of care to address gaps in diabetes care in Toronto. Model development was led by a multidisciplinary Diabetes Steering Committee and informed by input from health professionals, primary care, people with diabetes and caregivers. The Ministry incorporated these recommendations into decisions regarding funding of additional diabetes education programs and the planned creation of a diabetes coordinating centre.