



Crete Area Medical Center

Crete Hospital & Medical Clinic • Wilber Medical Clinic

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Crete Becomes First Rural Health Clinic in Nebraska to Earn Medical Home Recognition

Crete, NE (8/16/2010) – Crete Area Medical Center Physicians’ Clinic (CAMC) is pleased to announce that it has earned Physician Practice Connections-Patient Centered Medical Home (PPC-PCMH) Recognition from the National Committee for Quality Assurance, a private, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality.

CAMC is the first rural health clinic and one of only three clinics statewide to earn NCQA PPC-PCMH Recognition. There are no recognized patient-centered medical home practices in Kansas and only one in Iowa.

The Patient-Centered Medical Home (PMCH) is a promising model of health care delivery that aims to improve the quality and efficiency of care, PPC-PCMH identifies practices that promote partnerships between individual patients and their personal clinicians, instead of treating patient care as the sum of several episodic office visits. Each patient’s care is tended to by the clinician-lead care teams, who provide for all the patient’s health care needs and coordinate treatments across the health care system. Medical home clinicians demonstrate the benchmarks of patient-centered care, including open scheduling, expanding hours and appropriate use of proven health information systems.

“The patient-centered medical home promises to improve health and health care,” said NCQA President Margaret E. O’Kane. “The active, ongoing relationship between a patient and a clinician in medical homes fosters an all-too-rare goal in care: staying healthy and preventing illness in the first place. PPC-PCMH Recognition shows that Crete Area Medical Center Physicians’ Clinic has the tools, systems and resources to provide their patients with the right care at the right time.



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The changes in the Crete Area Medical Center as a patient-centered medical home are subtle, but powerful.

Consider the hypothetical 50-year-old patient who seeks medical attention under the current health care norm. The patient is a smoker, carrying a few extra pounds, with blood sugar levels slightly beyond normal.

Because the current standard of healthcare is more reactive than preventative, that patient might go home, having been treated for only the most immediate health concern.

In a few years, he may have diabetes and health conditions accompanying smoking and obesity.

Take the same patient seeking treatment at CAMC as a patient-centered medical home facility.

On that initial visit, the patient learns he is on the path to diabetes or obesity and receives medical education - tips on managing weight, blood sugar and smoking cessation. His doctor schedules appointments with CAMC's diabetes education program and a dietician. There are follow up calls and/or visits.

"In a few years, that same person does not have diabetes. They are active, still working," said CAMC's Chief of Medical Staff, Dr. Russell Ebke. "In a patient-centered medical home practice, a physician-led team oversees each patient's care. This team coordinates the patient's treatment and assures all health care needs are addressed, from preventative to acute care."

This is in contrast to more typical health care that is episode based and delivered by a range of physicians or specialists who are not connected with each other and the patient's medical history.

Initially, patients with chronic illnesses will see the most benefit from the program. Improving primary care has the potential to delay the onset of a disease, keep patients in their homes longer and keep them out of the emergency room, Ebke said.

According to Carol Friesen, CAMC's CEO, becoming a "medical home" facility builds on



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the philosophy already in place. “We have a significant investment in time, talent and resources to provide this level of care for our patients. This NCQA PPC-PCMH Recognition takes us to the next step,” she said.

CAMC has already implemented new programs that align with “medical home” guidelines, including the completion of electronic medical records, diabetes education programming, preventative screening regimens and on-going disease monitoring programs.

Down the road, “medical home” facilities may contribute to cost savings in health care. Preventing just one hospital stay can pay for a patient’s overall health care for years.

“Our goal is to help more people stay healthy, with less expense,” Friesen said.

To receive NCQA PPC-PMCH Recognition, which is valid for three years, Crete Area Medical Center Physicians’ Clinic demonstrated the ability to meet the programs key criteria, embodying characteristics of the patient-centered medical home. The NCQA PPC-PCMH Recognition standards are aligned with the joint principles of the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Osteopathic Association.

Crete Area Medical Center is a not-for-profit integrated medical center, including a Rural Health Access Physician’s Clinic, a Critical Access Hospital, an in-house laboratory, a diagnostic imaging center, surgical suites, a visiting specialist program and rehabilitation department. For more information about Crete Area Medical Center, contact Jody Vondra at (402) 826-6581.