

Health Ministries Network (HMN) “Ask a Nurse” Program



in Partnership with



Whatcom Family YMCA “Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program (BPSM)

Evolution of the HMN-YMCA Partnership

- ▶ HMN and the YMCA both applied for the Aging Well Whatcom Grant Round 2021 with Letters of Support from: OC, PeaceHealth, YMCA, Foothills Community Coalition.
- ▶ HMN received CHF funding for Ask a Nurse with the YMCA's letter of support, and the YMCA (and HMN) received support from Mt. Baker Foundation.
- ▶ In August, HMN started Ask a Nurse, and in October, the YMCA began to attend Ask a Nurse both to support and education about BP and the upcoming BPSM program.
- ▶ October-February, we spent time and resources building East County relationships, and several FCNs got trained as Healthy Heart Ambassadors.
- ▶ In February, the first BPSM program launched: We had 5, dropped to 2, and now 3 with rolling registration. The 2 who have completed it have had good results.



A guest at our Ask a Nurse Program and the YMCA BPSM at Catherine Mahaffey Wellness Fair at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRRC) in Maple Falls. Mary Latta, a YMCA Healthy Heart Ambassador, takes blood pressure, while Sunny Garza, RN and Faith Community Nurse and HMN Board Member prepares to teach someone about blood glucose monitoring.

BPSM Program Overview and Goals

- ▶ A 4-month program designed to support and encourage participants to accurately take/track BP at home twice a month and with an HHA twice a month and attend a nutrition seminar once a month to identify and support health lifestyle.
- ▶ The goal/measurable outcome is a decrease in BP.
- ▶ This program addresses lack of services in this geographical and connects people to services.
- ▶ It is one opportunity to empower community members to care for themselves and for each other.
- ▶ Checking BP opens up a larger health/wellness conversation.



BPSM Successes and Challenges

▶ Successes!

- ▶ Providing BP awareness and education
- ▶ Supporting under-resourced communities with important and potentially lifesaving medical equipment and education.
- ▶ Building community connections and support through BP awareness and healthy lifestyle. Empower (particularly important with the isolation of the past few years)
- ▶ Building relationships with the OC and Foothills Food Bank, and seeking education from community partners at the EWRC

▶ Challenges!

- ▶ Building trust within the community.
- ▶ Barriers in the community include: transportation, technology/communication, family issues, finances, food insecurity, fear, other.
- ▶ Promoting programs in this community requires creativity and work!



The Faith Community Nurses and Health Ministers who support our Ask a Nurse Program at the EWRRRC on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month while the **Foothills Food Bank** is open. They take BPs and provide: connection to healthcare resources through **PeaceHealth, UnityCare NW and SeaMar**; BP monitors from **Washington DOH** and **Mt. Baker Foundation**; Naloxone from the **North Sound Accountable Communities of Health (NSACH)**; bus passes through **WTA**; and Blood Glucose Monitoring equipment from the **Opportunity Council** with supplies purchased by the **Aging Well Whatcom/CHF** grant. Joni (lower left) is a Healthy Heart Ambassador for the YMCA as well as a BSN/RN and Faith Community Nurse.

Upper row: Rebecca Cavanaugh, RN and FCN; Holly Telfer (RN and FCN), Sarah Lane (ED of HMN and HM). Bottom: Joni Hensley, BSN/RN and FCN and **YMCA HHA**; Norma Maarhuis, RN and FCN.

Ask a Nurse Program Overview and Goals

- ▶ Ask a Nurse” encourages older adults and family members in rural eastern Whatcom County to bring health questions, health concerns and curiosities to a Health Ministries Network (HMN) nurse who is available in facilities well-known and easily accessed by residents in these communities two Tuesdays each month.
- ▶ The program has settled primarily at the EWRRC and provides a warm healthcare presence.
- ▶ On the 4th Tuesday of the month, HMN invites a partner to accompany: Dementia Support NW, NAMI, WTA, Mt. Baker Foundation, the YMCA and others, so that guests know these resources are available, and these organizations know residents of the Mt. Baker Foothills better.
- ▶ HMN brings or supports mobile medical services: scheduling vision/dental, partnering with CTK Bellingham and PeaceHealth/Mt. Baker Imaging to transport women to mammograms, provides blood glucose monitoring equipment at Wellness Fair.
- ▶ Contributes to the East Whatcom Health Reporter.
- ▶ Remains present and committed and comes with compassion and love to help discern what people feel they need and want in healthcare in their community.



BPSM Successes and Challenges

▶ Successes!

- ▶ Partnerships (Foothills Community Coalition is another one!)
- ▶ Presence and trust
- ▶ Community building among nonprofits and residents
- ▶ Provide essential services and supplies: emergency food, COVID-Care kits, masks and COVID-19 tests from **WCHD**, provide medical equipment, etc.
- ▶ Learning what people want and need: A Nurse Practitioner once a week with labs and limited pharmacy services in this area, dental and vision on a regular schedule.
- ▶ Seeing about 10-20 people regularly and more intensively and talking with 60+ people at each visit.

▶ Challenges!

- ▶ Weather and distance challenges volunteers.
- ▶ Partners' ability to work in this area due to distance and lack of technology.
- ▶ Sitting with people, meeting them where they are at, supporting in ways that residents want (this is both a success and a challenge).
- ▶ Working toward a long-term program of healthcare in this part of the county.



Thank you to Aging Well Whatcom for having faith in us that through love and partnership, we can care well for our neighbors.