



DR. JEAN-PIERRE ARSENEAU: Diabetes care trailblazer

Family physician targets community health, one patient at a time

By Elizabeth McCammon

Dr. Jean-Pierre Arseneau is taking an innovative approach to diabetes care. This family physician in the small New Brunswick town of Bathurst runs a “one-stop shop,” where patients can receive a full range of services, from nutritional counselling to foot care to fitness advice to medical care. “Dr. Arseneau is a trailblazer in New Brunswick,” says Lisa Matte, Diabetes Canada’s Atlantic regional director. “His unique model of care is not only helping individual patients to set and meet their goals, it is improving the health of the whole community.”

Diabetes Dialogue asked Arseneau to tell us a little more about his approach to treating people with diabetes.

Tell us about Clinique Médicale Nepisiguit.

My wife, Natalie Cauchon, who is also a physician, and I wanted to create a medical clinic where health-care professionals could collaborate in a team environment. We now have 14 family physicians, seven physician specialists and a diabetes nurse. Having your entire health-care team under one roof [known as a “Medical Home Model”] is great for people with diabetes because it means that they can have all their medical needs cared for in one visit.

Our medical records are fully computerized so that every member of the care team has immediate access to the same information; patients can even check their medical records from home. Better communication means better coordinated care.

Why did you want to focus on people with diabetes?

Diabetes is Public Enemy Number 1. As you know, the risk of type 2 diabetes is associated with increasing age and obesity. New Brunswick has the oldest population of any province in Canada and we also have the highest rate of obesity, so there are a lot of people at risk of developing the disease and its complications.

[No matter what type of diabetes it is,] my approach is to help each individual patient improve [his or her] diabetes management with a personalized plan of attack. If we can do that person by person, we will help the whole community. My hope is that by improving diabetes care now, our community will see fewer complications, such as strokes and heart attacks, 10 to 15 years down the road.



Dr. Jean-Pierre Arseneau

What are some of the unique initiatives you have been involved in?

We put a lot of emphasis on disease prevention and patient education, and I am especially interested in how we can help people eat better and be more active, which are both important for diabetes management. We have been involved in a couple of test projects, one of them with Vitalité Health Network [the regional health authority] and Diabetes Canada’s Live Well | Bien Vivre program, and another was one I spearheaded called Chronically Better, which [added] a health coach to our clinic. Patients received free at-home nutritional advice, exercise programs tailored to each individual, and support to encourage them to meet their goals. The projects demonstrated that investing in personalized care and coaching can have significant, measurable results that can improve diabetes management and overall health: After three to four months working with a coach, our patients lost an average of eight to 20 pounds, reduced their waistline by five to eight centimetres [two to three inches], and significantly lowered their blood pressure. You can’t achieve those kind of results with pills.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Diabetes Canada’s online diabetes management tools were created with leading health-care experts to help you reach your health goals. Visit “[Taking Charge of My Diabetes](#)” to find out how you can personalize a plan that works for you.