Proactive Diabetes Care during COVID 19: Fostering patient self management, improving organization of care and optimizing digital tools for better patient health outcomes.

CREDIT·VALLEY
Équipe de Santé Familiale • Family Health Team

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Background

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted both delivery of care and patient access to care especially when dealing with chronic disease management such as diabetes. The Credit Valley Family Health Team (CVFHT) proactively assessed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their diabetes patient care using a triangulated approach comprised of a clinic survey, EMR query, and a patient survey. The problems identified were: disruption of continuity of care, decrease in lab tests completed by patients, and increased risk of comorbidities. Identified needs were: patient self-management support, digital tools for virtual education, and implementation of a recall process.

This poster illustrates the processes implemented and highlights an educational initiative with the goal of supporting patients' diabetes self-management using glucose monitoring technology and to enhance virtual visits using digital tools.

Process

Needs Assessment:
1. Staff survey
2. EMR query
3. Recall of patients appointments pre and during pandemic
4. Patient needs survey

Intervention
1. Self-management education program
2. Glucose monitoring technology to enable better self-management
3. Utilization of digital tool enhance quality of virtual consultations

Outcome assessment
1. Patient self-management
2. Frequency of patient touchpoints
3. Uptake of digital tools by team and patients

Needs Assessment Discovery

EMR Query of diabetes patients:
• 14% had visit in last 6 months, 86% lost to follow-up
• 23% had 2+ A1C tests in past 12 months
• 33% not prescribed glucose monitoring devices
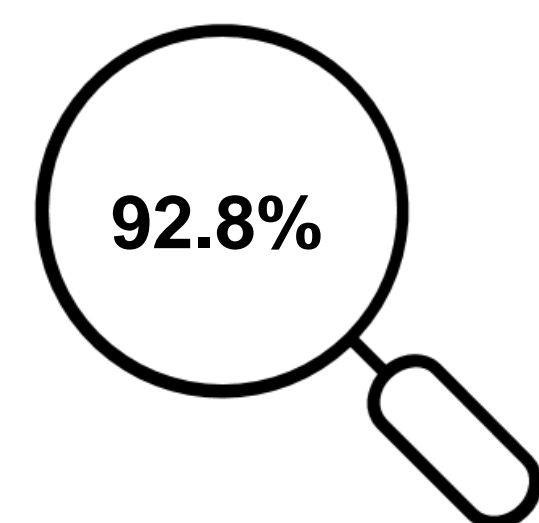
Diabetes Patient Survey (n = 294, 22% response rate)
Identified needs related to diabetes management during COVID-19.

48%
Did not have a visit in >6 months

34.3%
Do not / sometimes check glucose/ A1C due to: pain/don't want to poke, fear of going out, lack of motivation

92.8%
Interested in 'seeing' how glucose is affected by lifestyle factors

60%
Want to try glucose sensor technology and engage in education

Intervention: Self Management Group Education "TAKE CONTROL" and Utilization of Digital Health Tools Initiative

Goal: Increase patient diabetes self management by promoting the discovery of how food, activity, stress and medication impact glucose through the use of **FreeStyle Libre glucose monitoring system**. Therefore, enabling informed decision making related to lifestyle modifications and improved glucose management.

Design methods:

• Diabetes email portal created to share educational sessions and surveys with patients
• Patients started on FreeStyle Libre glucose monitoring system and provided with educational resources
• Sequenced 2-part sessions (1.5 hours each) spaced one week apart
• Adult learning principles and gamification to accelerate knowledge transfer and increase behavior change
• Facilitated by multidisciplinary team (GP, RN, RD, RPh)
• Evaluation of learning and change

TAKE CONTROL Virtual Session 1: Motivation and Discovery

• Patient "bright spot" interview between MD and a patient who benefited from FreeStyle Libre (peer to peer to evoke motivation)
• 'Interview style' including all CVFHT members for high level engagement ensuring patients can see themselves in the story
• Visual aides and demonstrations used to illustrate key teaching points

Learning points
✓ Use of device and device features
✓ How to see cause and effect of lifestyle and medication on glucose
✓ Goal: scan and discover

TAKE CONTROL Virtual Session 2: Self-Management and Behaviour Change

• Patients join breakout groups with a CVFHT member to share their experience and discoveries using the FreeStyle Libre glucose monitoring system (peer to peer learning).

Learning points
✓ Time in range
✓ Glucose variability
✓ How to view and interpret the glucose data to make lifestyle modifications
✓ How to share their data with their care team
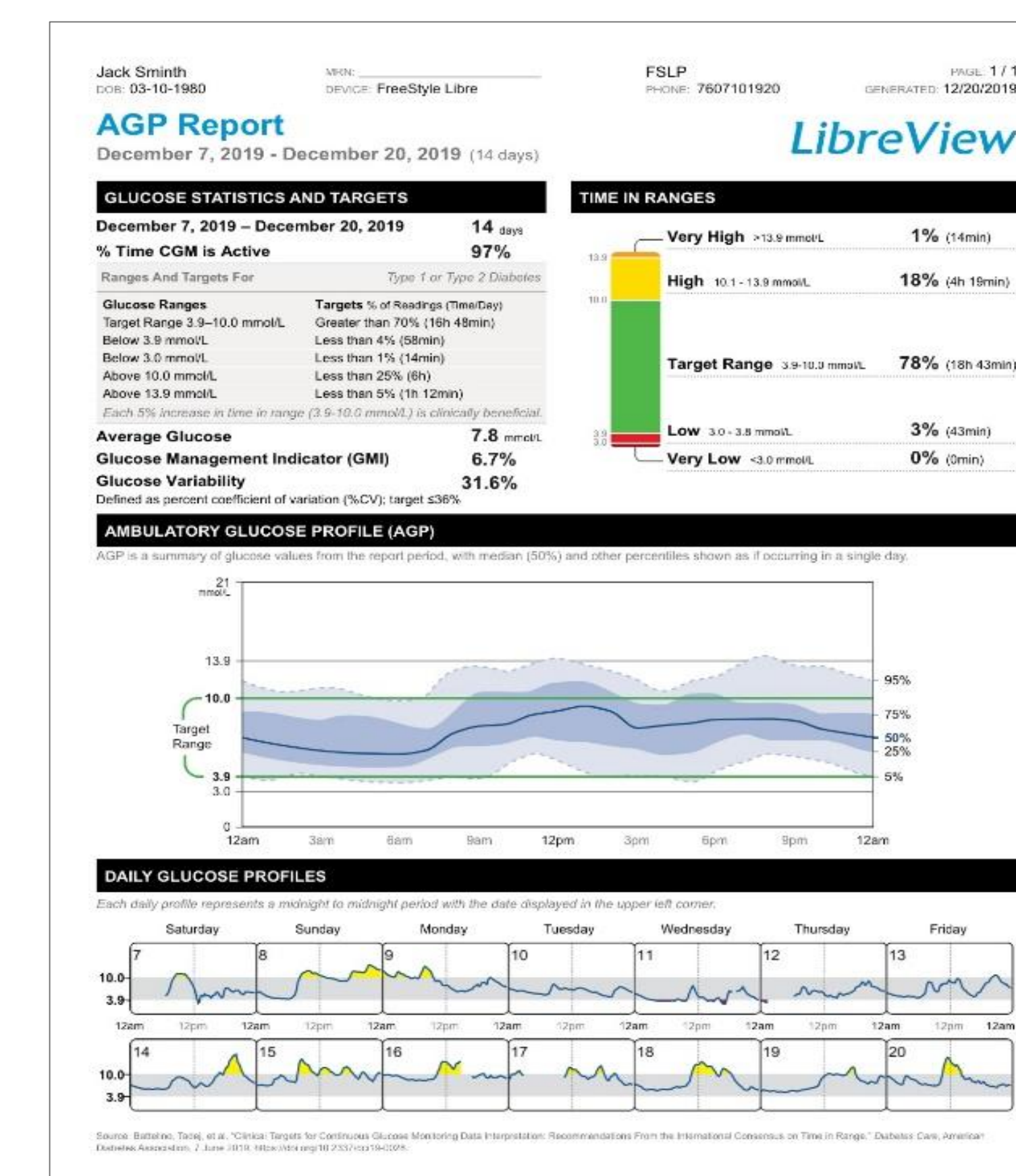
Outcomes

Increased patient self-management

• Patients who have been living with diabetes were able to see for the first time how food, activity, stress and medication affect their glucose, enabling pattern identification.
• 100% indicate new discovery about their diabetes that they never knew before.
• Patients were able to take control and make informed decisions to affect better glucose management.
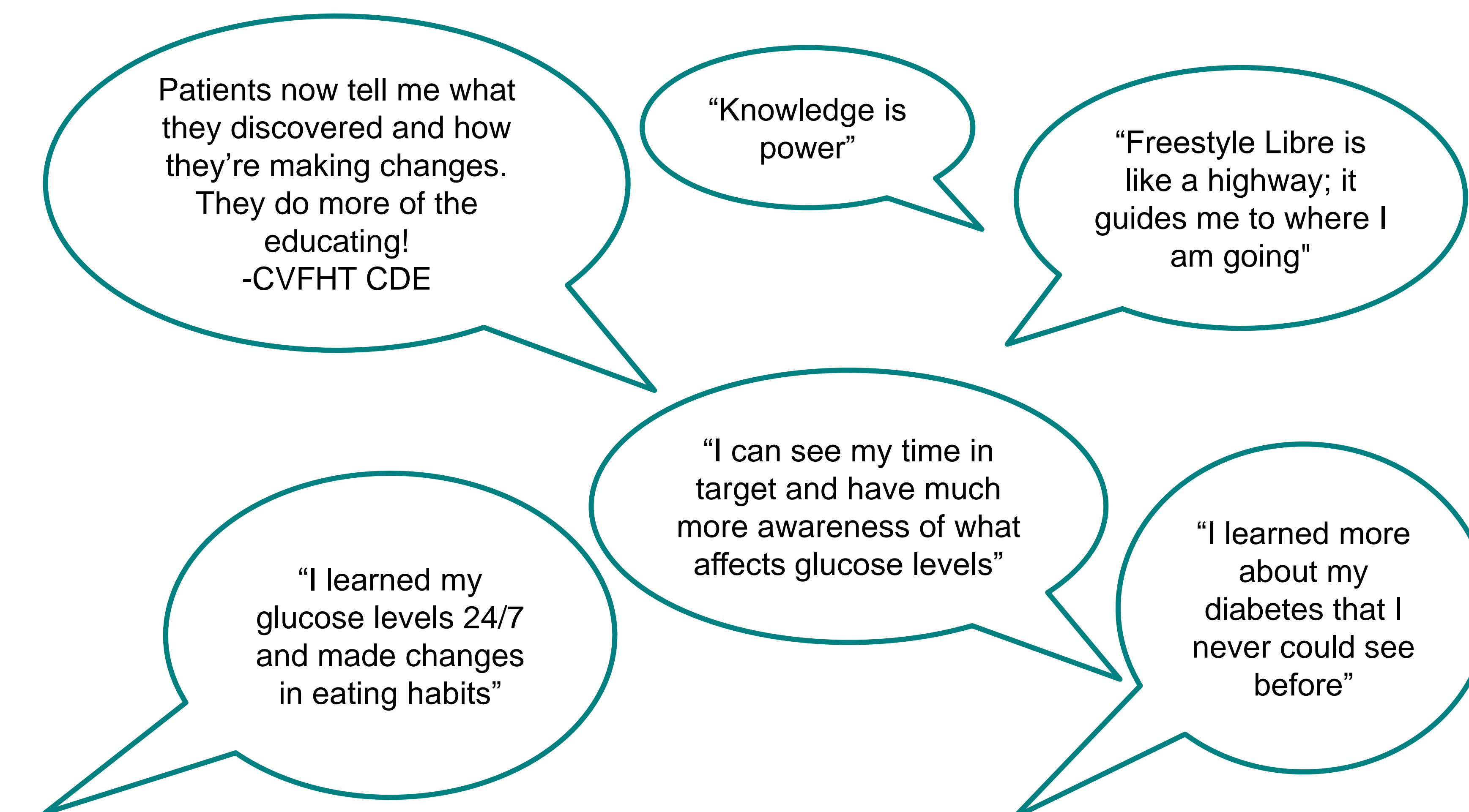• 100% indicated they would participate in additional education sessions.

Improved Delivery of Care

• Adoption of data sharing by patient and clinic (LibreView) supported more focused discussion and decision making.
• Utilization of digital tools and reports for virtual consultations.
• Data sharing enables collaborative patient-centered consultations.
• Multidisciplinary approach to patient education.

Improved Organization of Care

• Patient communication portal created.
• Team approach to care using digital tools for data sharing.
• Increase in staff and resident referrals to the diabetes care team.

Unedited Patient Feedback

"Patients now tell me what they discovered and how they're making changes. They do more of the educating! -CVFHT CDE"

"Knowledge is power"

"Freestyle Libre is like a highway; it guides me to where I am going"

"I can see my time in target and have much more awareness of what affects glucose levels"

"I learned my glucose levels 24/7 and made changes in eating habits"

"I learned more about my diabetes that I never could see before"

Next Steps

1. This initiative is ongoing and education sessions will be held on a quarterly basis. The third group will run in November.
2. Broadening scope to include community patients.
3. An EMR query will be re-run for to assess outcomes.
4. Ongoing education and involvement for interprofessional teams.