Diabetes Research Is OSU Initiative

The OSU Center for Health Sciences has launched a statewide clinical practice-based diabetes research initiative through a Center for Diabetes Care and Research network. Its mission is to improve health care for diabetes patients while benefiting diabetes research. In a “win-win” partnership with patients and researchers, the center will involve primary care physicians across Oklahoma who treat diabetic patients.

In turn, physicians will be able to enroll their patients in OSU’s planned diabetes studies, increasing the numbers of subjects and yielding data from a wider range of socioeconomic levels.

The research effort is one of the focus areas of OSU-CHS’s translational research initiative.

RESEARCH A CONTINUUM OF CARE

Translational research is a continuum of biomedical and clinical research and health care outcomes, says project director David Wallace, Ph.D., assistant dean for research.

“The center’s practice-based model will be a major benefit to diabetic patients,” Wallace says. “They will continue to see their primary care physicians throughout the course of their treatment. Once or twice each year the patients will receive educational training/updates, onsite examinations and participation in clinical studies.”

Wallace believes the approach should improve understanding of this disease and its health and economic impact on the state of Oklahoma.

RESEARCH PARTNERS ARE LISTED

Among research partners are OSU-CHS academic departments and its clinic system, along with clinical and biomedical research, rural health, telemedicine, behavioral science, epidemiology, and interdisciplinary clinical care.

Patients will receive diabetes education, self-management training, pharmacy services, retinal imaging, behavioral health services, nutrition information, dental hygiene and foot care.

A comprehensive diabetes care program, based on disease management principles, is a proactive approach to managing patients with chronic disease.

DISEASE MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The overall goal is to create an outcomes-based disease management program that systematically approaches patient care using evidence-based clinical guidelines.

Close collaboration between a nurse care manager with the clinic and community-based primary care physicians underlies the multidisciplinary team approach, says Judy Wickham, RN, MBA, continuous quality improvement case manager.

Each patient has a primary care physician who directs care. The multidisciplinary team works with the physician and the patient in a self-management approach to care, and monitors patients for complications.

The care manager liaisons between the patient, the physician and the center multidisciplinary team to help ensure that the individual patient has access to the right resources.

RURAL CLINICAL COORDINATORS

The diabetes center will further support the overarching mission of the Center for Rural Health by providing access to primary care for rural Oklahomans,” says William Pettitt, DO, OSU associate dean for rural health.

Wallace says base-line data could reveal problem areas such as genetic factors and metabolic changes that point to targeted research projects.

“We do not want to exclude any population of patients and will be able to retrospectively examine the data to help guide the direction of future studies,” he adds.

Tracking patients over time will allow comparisons of multiple socioeconomic, genetic, nutritional and physical factors. From a research view, this will help minimize bias and will generate a more accurate data representation of the diabetic populations being examined.

The long-term goal of the center is to develop into the premier diabetes care and research center in the region.

Agritourism Boom Hitting Oklahoma

Agritourism in Oklahoma and across America gets even more interesting when you look at current facts and reasons it has become so popular.

Here are facts from Turism Works for America, 13th Annual Edition, published by the Travel Industry Association of America.

Sixty-three million Americans [ages 16 years and older] visit farms annually, according to a survey taken by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Resources Conservation Service.

This estimate excludes the millions of children who visited farms for various activities like pumpkin picking, spring planting and summer camp trips.

STATES SHOW LARGE INCOME HIKES

States involved in agritourism have seen large income increases from agritourism. For example, a 2002 Vermont agritourism survey showed that about one-third of its state farmers received income from agritourism that reached a total of $20 million.

Guest ranches have seen an increase over the last couple of years, according to the Dude Ranchers’ Association. Dude ranches offer western experiences in settings with a livestock-oriented way of life.

Family reunions are on the rise for guest ranches, along with specialty weeks such as singles, adults only, mother-daughter, photography, fall foliage, artists, etc.

RANCHERS ARE LURING TOURISTS

Many ranches now are hosting conferences and team building events during their shoulder season and association members note increased visits by significant numbers of non-traditional groups such as grandparents with grandchildren, single parents who only have the children for a limited time, honeymooners and multigenerational family reunions.

The Travel Industry Association states that more than half of the traveling American public considers it important to experience or learn about cultures other than their own when they travel.

The term “geotourism” is often used interchangeably with “ecotourism,” which is defined as responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment.