



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## The PROMISE and Your Health Care

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Commentary

The Department of Primary Care at Fort Carson is delivering on a promise to improve your health care. The Patient Centered Medical Home has arrived! At the PCMH core is the commitment to serve you and your family's health care needs. The concept is grounded in disease prevention and wellness. Your health care providers want to partner with you to improve your preventive medical care. It's a long term investment in your health and well being.

Episodic care problems, such as colds or other minor illnesses, will continue to have priority attention in your Primary Care Clinic. However, the PCMH concept will also allow us to focus on chronic disease care. Common problems such as hypertension, obesity, lung disease, diabetes or osteoporosis are among those slated for special attention because they are often "silent", but these impact the quality of your life over time. We know that many of these problems are complex and are associated with potential complications if they are not addressed and closely monitored.

Chronic illnesses have a tremendous monetary cost associated with them, both on individual patients and our society. There are also other costs, too. Quality and quantity of life are affected. These illnesses result in the premature death of thousands each day. It is not uncommon for people who smoke to have chronic lung disease such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or asthma. This is on top of coronary artery disease, heart attacks and stroke! Obesity is directly associated with diabetes. In turn, diabetes increases our risk for stroke, heart attack, blindness and kidney failure. It is easy to see how the combined and comprehensive management approach can drastically improve the health of our community. Imagine the benefit if you modify your behavior and stop smoking, change your diet, exercise and lose weight.

We know, if we can get people to stop smoking, that intervention alone will reduce the incidence of heart attacks, chronic lung disease and hospitalizations. Proper education for patients with asthma improves their quality of life and reduces hospitalization. Proper treatment of diabetes results in improved control of blood sugars which is associated with improved long-term vision and kidney function. It can also mean fewer strokes, heart attacks, amputations and all the associated suffering and cost. All of these result in tremendous savings for everyone. Small lifestyle and behavior modifications can go a long way!



We want to help. Our PCMH team consists of your core team as well as nurse case managers, clinical pharmacologists, and behavioral health specialists. This extended group provides you with increased access to ensure that your health-related needs are managed in a comprehensive and deliberate fashion. We monitor and track Pap smears, mammograms, colon cancer screening, and chronic illnesses in order to prevent disease and limit the impact of those that already exist.

Ultimately, we need and want to engage you, our patients, in the active management and treatment of your health. You are at the center of the PCMH, surrounded by your health care team. Together, we have the opportunity to make great things happen. This is our promise to you. We will maintain a consistent focus on improving your health through disease surveillance and prevention. Join your medical team today in this commitment!