

# Bridging the Gap

CENTER FOR  
HEALING  
& HOPE

Providing medical care and advocacy for those without a medical home

Winter 2017

## Addressing a need for diabetes education

The symptoms—fatigue, dry mouth, dizziness, changes in vision—brought Maria\* to our clinic. When the 58-year-old woman left, she had a life-changing diagnosis—diabetes.

Sharon Miller, CHH clinic manager, said, “Imagine coming to the clinic for a few complaints and when you leave you know you may need to use insulin the rest of your life.”

Gil Pérez, new staff nurse for CHH (see page 3), was working that evening. In Spanish (Maria’s first language) he could give her basic information about what she would need to do. With an initial injection of insulin, Gil showed her how to do this for herself. Two family members had come with Maria, so they could learn with her.

Yolo López Pérez, patient advocate, attempted to refer Maria to a primary care physician, but none who serve uninsured people were taking new patients. So for the next several months, Maria will return regularly to CHH to learn more about monitoring her health and making lifestyle changes.

### The bigger picture

At CHH in 2016, 29 of the 33 new diagnoses of diabetes were for Latino patients. In part, this is because two-thirds of our patients are Hispanics.

This also matches a national picture. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, “Hispanics are more likely than the general population to develop diabetes. It is estimated that ... 10.4% of Hispanic and Latino Americans aged 20 and older have

\*Not her real name

diabetes.”

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, in its Healthy People 2020 initiative, points out that on average, Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are twice as likely to have diabetes as non-Hispanic whites of similar age.

### New emphasis for CHH

While our goal continues to be finding

a “medical home” for all of our patients, we cannot always do that promptly. So while those who are diagnosed with diabetes wait to be admitted to primary care physicians, Gil—as a native Spanish speaker—will be able to offer more than just the initial testing. He will lead our Newly Diagnosed Latino Diabetes Support Program with both one-on-one and group education and support. &



Gil Pérez, CHH staff nurse, takes the blood pressure of a patient (not the one described in this article) at a recent clinic session in Elkhart.

### What’s inside

Director’s view, by Bryan Mierau

New services for our patients

New board and staff members

**Fiesta  
Feast**

Saturday, April 22

## Director's view

I really like the name of our newsletter, "Bridging the Gap," because it speaks so directly to the CHH mission that was established 17 years ago.

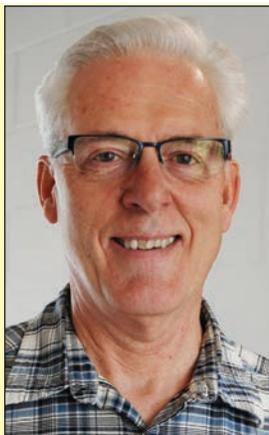
This phrase reminds me of a time in Israel's history where leadership in the nation had become so oppressive and self-serving that, "even common people oppress the poor, rob the needy, and deprive foreigners of justice." Then God says, "I looked for someone who might rebuild the wall of righteousness that guards the land. I searched for someone to stand in the gap in the wall so I would not have to destroy the land, but I found no one" (Ezekiel 22:29–30, NLT).

Envision with me a spiritual wall of righteousness called "grace and truth" that protects people, offering safety, security and the possibility of shalom for all. "Standing in the gap" has often been synonymous with prayerful

intercession. And intercession releases God's grace for effective advocacy—of the Micah 6:8 variety, "to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

Our CHH Board and team members carry the mandate to provide medical services and advocacy for the needy in our community. You, our partners, sustain us in this ministry because you honor the poor, care for the needy and seek justice for foreigners by way of the support you provide—much like a hand-in-hand human wall of compassion. "Bridging the Gap" suggests action. We appreciate your prayers for discernment as we consider expanded advocacy opportunities in our community.

— Bryan Mierau, Executive Director



## Thank you

**B**en Bontrager has joined the CHH board of directors as treasurer. He is Director of Financial Services for Goshen Health. Welcome, Ben.

**Renee Keck** has served as treasurer for the CHH board since 2012. Thank you, Renee, for your faithful work with the board and our finances at the Center for Healing & Hope. &

## Gil Pérez joins the CHH team

**G**il Pérez joined the CHH team in January to provide valuable assistance in our clinics as a nurse whose first language is Spanish.

Gil will work at the CHH clinics in Elkhart and Goshen, while continuing his work as an LPN at The Residence at Waterford Crossing.

Gil completed training as an LPN at IvyTech Community College in 2014. Previous to this he worked in manufacturing first in Mexico and then in the U.S. He also has been a financial advocate at the Goshen hospital.

See more about Gil at [chhclinics.org/blog/gil-perez-joins-chh-as-staff-nurse/](http://chhclinics.org/blog/gil-perez-joins-chh-as-staff-nurse/). &

*Bridging the Gap* is published three times a year by the Center for Healing & Hope. It is designed to build relationships to assist in meeting the health care needs of people in the Goshen and Elkhart communities.

Center for Healing & Hope  
P.O. Box 195  
Goshen, IN 46517-0195

CHHclinics.org  
Phone: 574.534.4744  
Fax: 574.537.1186  
[info@CHHclinics.org](mailto:info@CHHclinics.org)

### Office location

Plymouth United Church of Christ  
902 S. Main St., Goshen, IN

All photos by Mary E. Klassen

### Board of Directors

Jorge Campos - Chair  
Rev. Linda Sue Hewitt - Secretary  
Ben Bontrager - Treasurer  
Susan Stiffney, RN  
Amanda Schmidt, MD  
Josi DeHaven, RN  
Tim Stair - Past chair  
Emma Hartman - Recorder  
Mary Kay Delneky (leaving in February)  
Renee Keck (leaving in February)

### Staff

Bryan Mierau, BSN, MA, HFA - Executive director  
Angela Miller, MD - Medical director (volunteer)  
Sharon Miller, RN, BSN - Clinic manager  
Gil Pérez, LPN - Staff nurse  
Yolo López Pérez - Patient advocate  
Mary E. Klassen - Communication specialist  
Mim Kiogima - Office manager  
Janelle Martin - Accounting technician and development support

### Clinic hours

#### Elkhart Clinic

Grace Lutheran Church  
831 W. Marion, Elkhart  
**Monday** 4:30-7:30 p.m.

#### Goshen Clinic

Plymouth United Church of Christ  
902 S. Main St, Goshen  
**Tuesday** 4:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Thursday** 4:30-7:30 p.m.  
**Friday** 8:30-11:30 a.m.

### Clinic schedule

Patients check in the first hour  
Clinic session follows

# New services for our patients

**N**ew resources are available to patients of CHH: assistance to quit smoking, assistance in finding health insurance and Spanish-language education about diabetes. The first two come through partnerships with other area medical providers.

**Smoking cessation:** Mark Potuck, tobacco treatment specialist for Goshen Health, will meet with any CHH patient who wants support to quit smoking. Anyone visiting CHH can request this—at no cost—from Patient Advocate Yolo López Pérez.

**Help signing up for insurance:** A navigator from Heart City Health Center is present at the Goshen CHH clinic two times each month to help patients sign up for health insurance. One patient was able to get immediate temporary insurance while her application was being reviewed. This allowed her to get tests she needed right away.



Jairo Garcia, navigator from Heart City Health Center, Elkhart, helps a CHH patient find and sign up for health insurance.

**Diabetes Education:** We are offering free one-on-one sessions and at least one group session in Spanish with a nurse for people newly diagnosed with diabetes. This will help them understand diabetes and how to manage their condition while they wait to be admitted to a primary care physician. (See more on page 1.) &

## Thank you, corporate sponsors

### Diamond



Goshen Health  
ALL FOR LIFE.



ELKHART  
GENERAL HOSPITAL

COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
OF  
ELKHART COUNTY



Bontrager  
Family  
Foundation

### Platinum



### Gold



# Fiesta Feast

Saturday, April 22

5-7 pm

College Mennonite Church  
1900 S Main St, Goshen

Meal prepared by  
**San Marcos**  
Mexican Grill:  
Carnitas, pollo,  
rice, beans, salad

Mark the date.  
Tickets on sale soon.





In order by when they served as CHH executive director are Dale Wentorf, Clare Krabill, Becky Gascho and Bryan Mierau.

## Honor ... engage ... envision

In late January, Bryan Mierau invited all the previous executive directors of CHH to meet together. The gathering fits the theme he began with at CHH in October: “Honor the past - Engage the present - Envision the future.” Conversation at the meeting covered the 17 years of CHH history and all three parts of the theme, with insights from the beginnings to recommendations for how CHH can continue to grow in serving the Elkhart and Goshen communities. &

## NAP tax credits

With NAP (Neighborhood Assistance Program) credits, you may receive tax credit for up to half of a donation to a non-profit.

CHH applies for NAP credits each spring and if we receive them, we will inform everyone on our email list. Watch for a message from us about this offer.

NAP credits are given on a first-come, first-served basis. Those that CHH offers are usually taken very quickly, so if you wish to participate, contact us as soon as you receive the email message.

The Center for Healing & Hope provides urgent medical care and advocacy, in the name of Christ, for people in our community who are without a medical home. Be part of the mission by making a donation today: [CHHclinics.org/donate](http://CHHclinics.org/donate)

P O Box 195  
Goshen, IN 46527-0195

CENTER FOR  
HEALING  
& HOPE