

## **PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS TEACH EACH OTHER AT ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL'S MEDICINE CLINIC**

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Residency marks a significant milestone in a physician's journey. It represents the point at which he or she can begin applying what they have learned in a hands-on manner. They are prepared to recognize symptoms and diagnose and treat illness.

Residents learn much more than that at the Medicine Clinic, which offers care to community members who do not have insurance or are unable to pay for services. Because many of their patients are seeking asylum from abuse, residents learn how to treat patients with highly sensitive issues, such as those resulting from rape or torture.

Treatment at the Medicine Clinic includes building trusting, lasting relationships with patients. Residents help patients establish routine medical care and preventive treatment so they can live safer, healthier lives. "The Medicine Clinic has added so much value to my residency experience," says resident Tara McMichael. "As residents, we learn professional skills that go beyond treating illness. Our skills grow to include the art of medicine and treatment of the patient as a person."

Patients have a role in shaping the residents' practices and skills. "Many of them love that they are teaching us as much as we teach them," remarks McMichael.

While an acute illness or issue might initially bring an underserved patient to the Medicine Clinic, residents are committed to treating the whole person. Often, an untreated chronic condition is present. Residents have helped address chronic conditions by stabilizing a patient's kidney disease, keeping blood pressure under control, or helping a diabetic patient meet their A1C goal. When the cost of care prohibits patients from getting help, the Medicine Clinic relies on its social worker to find the resources they need.

The need to support this service is greater than ever. New eligibility requirements for many of the government health care programs leave more patients than ever uninsured, while payment rates from Medicare, Medicaid and insurance companies have declined. Because of the Medicine Clinic, patients may be treated without entering the Emergency Department, which is far more costly.