

November is [National Diabetes Month](#). This year the [National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#) is focusing the month on gestational diabetes, the type that can develop during pregnancy. Women who have experienced gestational diabetes have a *lifelong* higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes or pre-diabetes, as do their children.



## SASH: Tackling diabetes on multiple fronts

Older adults with diabetes often have a number of other chronic conditions, or “co-morbidities.” Among current SASH participants with diabetes (25%), fewer than 1% have that condition as their only diagnosis; in fact, they average six co-morbidities. As noted in this [Rand report on the prevalence of multiple chronic conditions](#), nationally 12% of U.S adults have five or more chronic conditions, which accounts for 41% of total health-care spending.



“Educate, empower and then support” was the message from Jill Robert RN, SASH wellness nurse and certified diabetes educator, shown leading a diabetes training for SASH staff in Burlington earlier this fall.

SASH participants with diabetes are significantly more likely to also have diagnoses of hypertension (81%), osteoarthritis (69%), chronic pain (49%), depression (45%), gastroesophageal reflux disease (44%), coronary artery disease or myocardial infarction (42%), anxiety (34%) and thyroid disease (22%).

While the treatment and pathology of these conditions are highly connected, they speak to the complexities of helping SASH participants manage multiple conditions. Toward this end, SASH has a number of ongoing initiatives:

- With our **successful diabetes pilot in Rutland** now wrapped up (see article below), we have received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention to continue and expand our focus on diabetes prevention and management statewide, in partnership with the Vermont Department of Health.
- Over the past year, 93 SASH participants have completed one of the **19 evidence-based diabetes classes taught by 23 trained SASH leaders**. These classes are continuing.
- For the past two years, SASH coordinator Aida Husrefovic has run a **monthly diabetes support group** for her Burlington panel. Regularly attended by eight participants, the meetings typically lasted well beyond the scheduled hour due to the attendees’ high level of engagement. “The members really enjoyed it – they talked about their challenges and supported each other in reaching their goals,” Aida reports, adding that three participants reported improved blood-sugar levels, and all of them started seeing their physicians more

regularly. Currently on hiatus, the group plans to reconvene after the holidays.

- SASH nursing fellow Sean Fiore will be testing an **A1c (blood sugar) visual aid** he has developed, starting with SASH participants at Cathedral Square Senior Living in Burlington. Pending positive feedback from the people there, he hopes to expand its use throughout SASH. “The aid is designed make the numbers more meaningful and personalized, which supports better understanding and ultimately better self-management” of the condition, Sean says.



## SASH diabetes pilot in Rutland yields positive results

Results from a SASH pilot with the Rutland Housing Authority SASH teams are in. The pilot set out to measure the impact of adding a community pharmacist to the SASH team for the purpose of helping SASH participants with diabetes or pre-diabetes better manage their condition. Pharmacist Marty Irons, of Rutland’s Beauchamp & O’Rourke Pharmacy, participated on the SASH team. SASH hopes to implement the model at another SASH site in the near future. [Download this summary](#) (PDF file) for information about the Rutland outcomes.



Partners represented on SASH teams throughout Vermont include members and affiliates of these organizations:



A comprehensive list of all the valued partners in SASH can be found in the [SASH Partnership](#).



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