

# DLHS Research Snapshot

## Gretchen Piatt, MPH, PhD, Works on Diabetes Self-Management

*“It is becoming imperative to move the concept of the learning health system beyond the walls of the academic medical center and into community settings, where individuals live, work, and play.”*

**The Problem:** There is a lack of sustainable, diabetes support services that are available in underserved urban areas. Diabetes requires ongoing self-management and support services throughout a person’s lifetime.

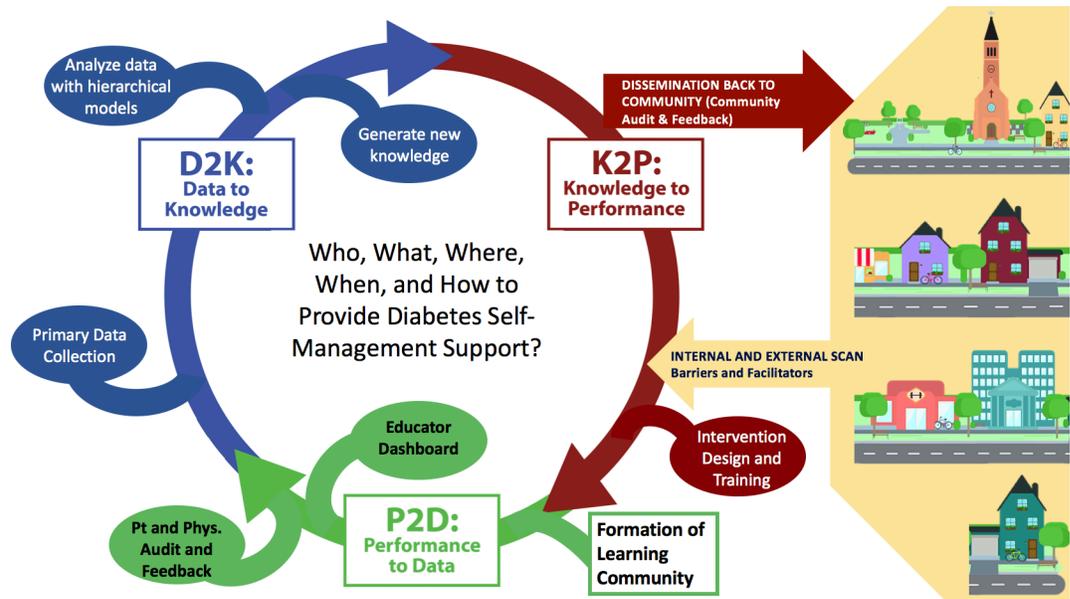
**The Promise:** In the future community organizations (churches, behavioral health clinics, YMCAs, public health agencies, etc.) will be able to provide support services, by trained professionals and non-professionals, that are patient-centered, adaptive to change, and reimbursable by third party payers.

**The Project:** Dr. Piatt, was awarded a 5-year R01, funded by [NIDDK](#), to explore this area of research in Southeast Michigan and Northwest Ohio. *The Praise Diabetes Project* is a 33-month randomized controlled trial in 21 African American churches. The study’s goal is to assess the sustainability of improvements observed following education services through three different approaches to self-management support. This is the longest proposed duration of **any** self-management support study to date and one of the few studies that formally examines the community’s ability to sustain the efforts that are put in place as part of a research study.

**KEY WORDS**

Community Support  
Empowerment  
Infrastructure  
Implementation  
Disparities  
Sustainability

**Learning Health System in Action:** There are thousands of research studies and clinical/behavioral efforts happening in community settings, but the data generated from these initiatives often lie dormant. Results aren’t routinely disseminated back to the community so that they may learn from the data and adjust their efforts.



*The Praise Diabetes Project* attempts to combat this issue by incorporating the entire learning health cycle into the study (see figure). They start by forming a diabetes support learning

community, training professionals and non-professionals to provide support services, implementing evidence-based interventions, evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of the interventions, and generating new knowledge to disseminate back to the community so that sustainability may be achieved.

**The Bottom Line:** Without sustainable solutions to providing self-management support, people with diabetes are left to manage their disease on their own 95% of the time, resulting in higher rates of morbidity and billions of dollars in healthcare expenses.

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