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Mountain-Pacific Quality Health Employee Named National Diabetes Educator of the Year

Helena, Mont., (August 19, 2016) – Mountain-Pacific Quality Health employee Marci Butcher recently received the national 2017 Diabetes Educator of the Year Award.

The American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) names one recipient from across the United States as the Diabetes Educator of the Year. Butcher was nominated for the award by fellow Montana diabetes educators, based on her contribution to the field and her dedication, innovation and sensitivity in patient care. The announcement was made August 13 in San Diego, California, during an AADE conference.

Butcher, a diabetes education advisor at Mountain-Pacific who supports the organization's health care quality improvement diabetes team in Montana, works with Medicare beneficiaries with diabetes or pre-diabetes to help them become empowered "self managers" of their diabetes and their health. In addition to her position at Mountain-Pacific, Butcher is also the Quality Diabetes Education Initiative coordinator/consultant for the Montana Diabetes Program at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

"Honestly, this is very much a team award," said Butcher, who has been involved in diabetes education for more than 25 years. "We have an amazing team here and have something very special in Montana. I have been talking about the work in Montana at various conferences, because we all work together, and we all help each other. If you support diabetes educators and their programs, you are supporting people with diabetes. The ultimate outcome here is helping people with diabetes and those at risk for diabetes."

"Marci's passion for and commitment to helping persons with diabetes are but a few of the reasons she was chosen for this award. Her energy is boundless and Mountain-Pacific is fortunate to be able to work with her as a partner, colleague and team member over the years." says Sara Medley, Mountain-Pacific's CEO.

Over the past 16 years, the number of certified diabetes educators has greatly increased as well as the number of recognized diabetes programs in the state of Montana. Despite increasing access to professional educators and programs, many people do not take advantage of diabetes education services.

(More)

This may in part be due to cultural, financial, transportation, weather or geographical barriers common to many individuals living in Mountain-Pacific's four-state region.

As part of a national effort, Mountain-Pacific works within its region to deliver diabetes empowerment classes using a program called the Diabetes Empowerment Education Program (DEEP)[™] to support, not replace, education from a health care provider or professional diabetes instructor.

DEEP is designed to engage people with diabetes or pre-diabetes and help them make positive behavior changes and to be a well equipped and activated partner in their own health and health care. Mountain-Pacific is the Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) for Montana, in addition to Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and has a federal contract to improve diabetes education in this region.

Butcher has always had an interest in diabetes, but it was not until she was a dietitian for Big Horn County in southwest Montana that her path as a diabetes educator would be cemented in her heart. One of her clients, a grandmother caring for her grandchildren from the Crow Agency community, gave Butcher a hand-beaded gift after she helped manage the grandmother and her family's diabetes conditions.

"That emotional moment ultimately started my path as a diabetes educator," said Butcher.

Near that same time, Butcher's husband developed type 1 diabetes, which spurred her career in diabetes education and management. She personally knows what it is like to be part of a family that lives with diabetes every day.

"If you think of diabetes, it is a 24/7, 365-day a year job to manage it," said Butcher. "You have to have the knowledge and skills to manage diabetes and you have to empower yourself. I believe the message of self-management and empowerment is powerful, and you can make positive changes."

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About Mountain-Pacific—Mountain-Pacific is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation and holds federal and state contracts that allow them to oversee the quality of care for Medicare and Medicaid members. Mountain-Pacific works within its region (Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam and American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) to help improve the delivery of health care and the systems that provide it. Mountain-Pacific's goal is to increase access to high-quality health care that is affordable, safe and of value to the patients they serve. www.mpqhf.org

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