Lawndale Christian Health Center Success Story

February 2026

Community-Centered Care

Former Lawndale Christian Health Center participant, **Maria Guadalupe Ramirez**, is now a National Diabetes Prevention Program Lifestyle Coach, championing program expansion to Spanish-speaking participants.

Follow Maria's Journey:

1 **Diagnosis**

In February 2023, Maria was diagnosed with pre-diabetes and quickly decided to act and take charge of her health.

2 **Program Success**

In April 2023, Maria enrolled in the National Diabetes Prevention Program at Lawndale Christian Health Center. In August, her A1C dropped to 4.7, and she completed the program in May 2024.

3 **Volunteering**

In May 2024, Maria began volunteering with the Lawndale Christian Health Center program and in February 2025, she began training to become a National Diabetes Prevention Program lifestyle coach.

4 **Leading**

In May 2025, Maria launched two National Diabetes Prevention Program groups. The Homan site launched its first program, while the Archer site saw major growth in participation amid its second year of programming.

Background

Upon receiving a "prediabetic" diagnosis, Maria was immediately fearful of getting Type 2 diabetes, which 14.1% of the population in Chicago has been diagnosed. She channeled that fear into immediate action when her dietician, Truly Gannon, referred her to the newly established National Diabetes Prevention Program lifestyle change program at Lawndale Christian Health Center. Once Maria started the program, she took it upon herself to enroll in a Community Health Worker certification class at Chicago City College to gain confidence in managing her health.

> *I knew when I got the prediabetic diagnosis that I was determined to take my health into my own hands and not be static. By knowing and understanding the A1C numbers and the tools to get those numbers down, I knew I could do it. I also knew that I wanted to pass on the information.*
>
> - **Maria Guadalupe Ramirez**, NDPP Lifestyle Coach

Approach

Convened by the Illinois Public Health Institute and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the CARES: Cook County initiative supports programs and systems that expand access to evidence-based diabetes prevention and management programs. Direct support to community health centers, like Lawndale Christian Health Center, allows for a community-centered, tailored approach to program delivery, while the team at Illinois Public Health Institute provides ongoing training, technical assistance, and support to providers, including links to MATCH and CDC resources. Learn more at CaresCookCounty.org.



Pictured: Maria Guadalupe Ramirez, NDPP Lifestyle Coach

The Opportunity

Maria ambitiously pursued her Community Health Worker certification and National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) Lifestyle Coach training. Her lived experience as a former program participant, coupled with her role as a Spanish-speaking coach, made her a great addition to the Lawndale Christian Health Center team's efforts to expand the NDPP to Spanish speaking populations. Maria's contributions directly advanced the **2320 Strategy 5** by making the NDPP more accessible and responsive to the needs of the communities it serves, increasing enrollment and retention in her community.

With Maria's help, Lawndale Christian Health Center has grown to provide programming to **83 participants across 10 cohorts provided in both English and Spanish.** Some participants have even seen their A1C levels reduce due to participation.

> *Something that is very important to me is being able to give back to the community that has given me a lot. Today, type 2 diabetes is an epidemic, and if I can give the tools necessary to those at risk, I am also helping their families because change starts with one and the rest will follow.*
> **- Maria Guadalupe Ramirez**, NDPP Lifestyle Coach



Maria completes the NDPP program in May 2024.



Maria volunteers with the NDPP program at LCHC.

Next Steps

One of the biggest goals for Lawndale Christian Health Center (LCHC) is to ensure the sustainability of the National Diabetes Prevention Program. The initial grants provided by the Illinois Public Health Institute empowered LCHC to start the program and make invaluable relationships with other organizations. LCHC also received technical assistance to enroll in and seek reimbursement from Medicaid and Medicare for the National Diabetes Prevention Program. As a fully recognized Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program that also is successful in seeking reimbursement through Medicaid, LCHC is confident in the ability to operate sustainably while continuing to expand at clinic sites.

LAWNDALE CHRISTIAN HEALTH CENTER
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