



Lydia Best, MD

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I grew up in the backyards of Northwest Detroit. Educated in Detroit Public Schools, Brown University, and University of Michigan Medical School, I completed my Family Medicine residency at the University of Maryland. Some time along the way, I became a wife and mother of three. After only three years, I walked away from a secure position at a large Detroit hospital system to start a journey whose mission only God knows.

At Chicago's 2003 Christian Community Health Fellowship conference, I ran into the president and the administrator of a low-cost medical clinic called Covenant Community Care, Inc. (CCC) that was about to open in Southwest Detroit. I started volunteering almost immediately. A year later, the clinic's Board asked me to serve as medical director. They were pondering whether we should convert from a free-clinic to a Community Health Center and a medical director would be one of many hurdles to cross in transition.

In September 2007, after tremendous encouragement and support from the clinic Board and core donors, as well as many community, state, and county organizations, CCC (and actually the greater metropolitan community) was awarded the Federally Qualified Health Center designation. This added strength to the health care safety net in Detroit and sustainability to CCC's mission to show and share the love of God, as seen in the good news of Jesus Christ, by providing integrated, affordable, and quality health care to those who need it most.

Coming to Mexican Village was an unexpected but exhilarating twist in the road. I always knew that I was called to live and serve in my hometown of Detroit, but this was not the Detroit that I knew. Facing the challenges of learning a new language and culture put a sharper focus on the common needs and mutual strengths that the staff, volunteers and patients all share. It has forced me to remember that if we aren't really partners - in communication, in decision making, in spreading the financial burden - none of us will truly win.

At the same time, watching a grassroots initiative spread across race, religion, and culture to gain a foothold as a vital community resource shows me what Southeast Michigan can do when we truly work together! I truly cherish the opportunity that God and CCC have afforded me to be a part of this mission.

Michigan Primary Care Association
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