

Baltimore - DNP Student Developing Program to Help Patients Lose Weight

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Amber Richert, MSN, RN, a DNP student at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Baltimore, is working on a plan of action and education that would remove hurdles that cause so many anti-obesity efforts to fail. Richert said she understands the frustration of healthcare providers who "have 15 minutes for a patient who has multiple chronic conditions and takes a dozen medications. treating the obesity is low on the list."

And she knows the challenges in finding a one-size-fits-all treatment method.

"The patients are really complex," said Richert, who works at the federally qualified health center Community Health Center, New Britain, CT.

Patients there may work multiple jobs or live on state assistance. Most have limited transportation options and little access to fruits and vegetables in "food deserts," inner-city zones more likely to feature convenience stores than high-end supermarkets.

Building on work she did as an MSN student at JHUSON, Richert is developing a pilot study that would offer patients several weeks of intervention (education and counseling on diet, exercise and self-monitoring) followed by weeks of "maintenance" with the clinic doing the checking in (by text or other electronic means). She's hoping to find a program that's sustainable-for those who can't get to the clinic as well as those who can.

Studies have shown that both groups, treated successfully, tend to lose roughly equal amounts of weight.