

The Importance of an Annual Eye Exam for Patients with Diabetes

I received a call from a client who was past due for an annual diabetic eye exam. She stated that her vision had been blurry and requested help in making an appointment for an eye exam. I called her eye doctor and had an appointment scheduled for her the following week. The client agreed on the time and date of the appointment. The next day I received a phone call from my client's medical physician stating that my client was at the clinic with her family. She woke up that morning and the vision in one eye was total blackness and the other eye was so blurry that she could not see effectively. A referral was made to an eye surgeon for the following day who confirmed that this client was losing her sight in one eye due to retinal hemorrhage and needed surgery immediately. Within 3 days she had surgery in her right eye. The surgery was successful but there was still the problem with the other eye. Her recovery from the right eye was amazing and within three months she had laser surgery in the left eye for the same problem.

There was also the concern of the cost for the surgery. After receiving the bills for several thousand dollars for one eye surgery and later a second surgery, I was able to help my client apply for charity care at the surgery center. She was approved for 100% write-off for indigent care and in turn, the eye surgeon was able to match the same discount given by the surgery center.

My client now understands the importance of keeping appointments for her diabetic care. The Kansas Statewide Farmworker Health Program will pay for an annual diabetic eye exam. We know and understand the damage that that diabetes can do if a person does not get the appropriate care needed to help control and manage this condition. I am happy that the end result was successful for this client.

