



If you've driven AZ-264 through St. Michaels recently, this sign might have caught your eye. St. Michaels Clinic is passionate about early detection of diabetes and peripheral artery disease (PAD) – and in saving feet and limbs. Left untreated, diabetes can lead to PAD, decreased blood flow to feet and limbs, and eventually require amputations. With the high rate of diabetes on the Navajo Nation, this is an issue close to home.

Donovan Yazzie, Medical Assistant at the Clinic notes that “We are all affected in a way – either we know somebody or we are affected ourselves. Knowing that we can help people is what makes us strive to do our work the best we can with all the technology that we have here.”

The technology that Donovan is referring to is the ultrasound scan that allows for early detection of circulatory issues. Patients can be scanned locally at St. Michaels Clinic, the scan is then sent using high-speed fiber optic internet service provided by NTUA Wireless (NTUAW) to the physicians at Modern Vascular, and together they work with patients for a treatment plan.

The Clinic formed this relationship, enabled by NTUAW connectivity, as “a partnership of physicians coming together to make sure the focus is the

community and for people to be able to know that there can still be a good and productive life after a diabetes diagnosis,” says Dr. Catherine Torres, Medical Director of St. Michaels Clinic.

The mission of St. Michaels Clinic is to provide high quality primary care and help the community have healthy and productive lives. For CEO Daniel Johnson, this means serving anyone who walks through the door – and providing care utilizing technology that is taken for granted in most non-rural areas. In addition to ultrasound scans and onsite lab work, the Clinic is also working to setup video calling via Skype for people to talk with their doctors in Phoenix or Flagstaff.

Mr. Johnson acknowledges the need for access to high speed broadband service to be able to deliver on its mission. After hearing that St. Michaels Clinic’s sister clinic in Sanders, AZ had recently signed up for internet service with NTUAW, a provider of wireless and broadband services on the Navajo Nation, Mr. Johnson contacted NTUAW about the mission of St. Michael’s clinic and the need for reliable (and affordable) broadband service. He was pleased to learn that NTUAW, as a Navajo Owned and Navajo Proud company, was eager to join the cause. Because NTUAW is able to provide a fiber-optic solution with unlimited bandwidth, the St. Michaels Clinic is now able to work with doctors in Phoenix and Flagstaff to bring these health care services to the Navajo Nation. Now, he says, “We’re ahead of our time here to start doing these kinds of things, especially with radiology information. The images can easily be sent through our new connectivity here.”

Dr. Torres wants to spread the word that even with a diabetes diagnosis you don’t always have to be on insulin, and you can still do your job and have a great life. “Part of it is diet and activity and getting your follow ups done. You can still do the things you were doing, just not with certain foods. We need to go back to eating what our ancestors ate, which was not fast foods.” Modern Vascular is soon opening a clinic in Tse Bonito, so patients who need interventional procedures can do so closer to home and take care of their feet and limbs – and prevent future amputations.

So next time you drive through St. Michaels stop by St. Michaels Clinic and remember – Ya’ah’teeh. All are welcome here.