

## Abstract

Educational conferences serve as a tool for health care professionals to acquire knowledge and be able to network. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic our Diabetes (DM) Symposium was an “in person” conference for 16 years. The pandemic reshaped our practice when the evidence pointed to the need for a virtual platform. Our DM team in conjunction with a world renowned heart institute made the necessary changes to deliver the conference in virtual form. The symposium provided effective evidence-based presentations that enhanced clinical knowledge in the mist of this world pandemic in a safe manner. Participation of health providers supported the need to continue with these events despite challenges. It also showed that technology and innovation can help us connect with each other. The symposium allowed virtual interaction and enhanced participant’s knowledge

## Background

The Diabetes Collaborative Practice Team (DCPT) is a multidisciplinary team which focuses on DM related care in the hospital. Part of its role is to establish topics for the annual conference based on a needs analysis. A date was selected, grants were obtained for funding, and speakers contacted for participation. However, the pandemic started in 2019 and the DM symposium was cancelled. In 2020, the DM educators were furloughed. In spite of these challenges, the DM educators were able to deliver a virtual conference in 2020. In 2021, the symposium was set for December, but due to the pandemic surge, the date was changed to March 2022 as a virtual only conference

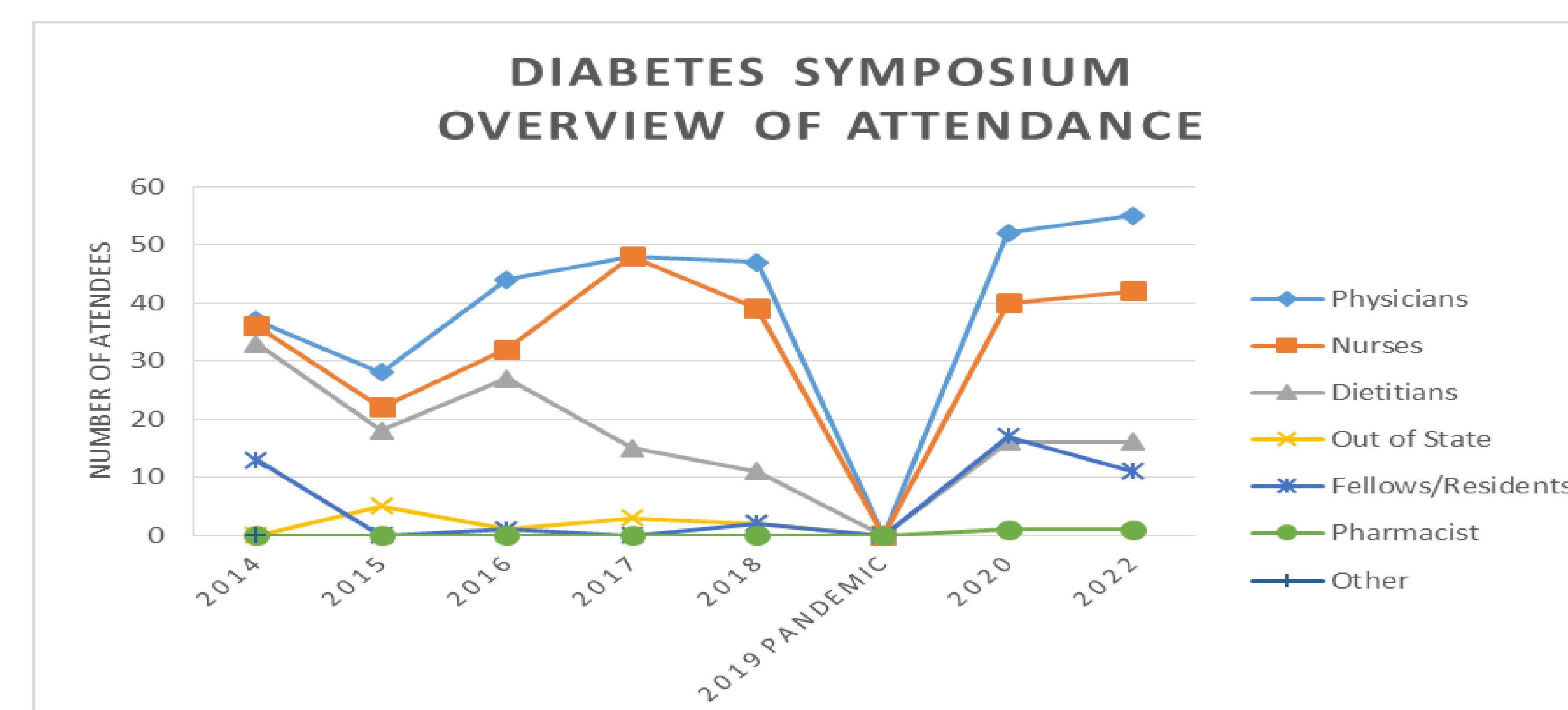
## Barriers

- COVID-19 Pandemic
- Educators involved were furloughed and returned to work with limited time to plan the conference
- Internet/network connection issues
- Not all participants were technologically fluent
- Virtual fatigue reported

## Educational Model

- Develop a DCPT and perform a needs analysis
- Select 2-3 world renowned Endocrinology speakers and 4-5 renowned local speakers
- Topics may include pathophysiology, nutrition/lifestyle modification, acute/chronic complications, medication updates, research, Standards of Care, and technological advancements
- E-mail links were sent to attendees to login virtually
- Multiple vendors shared their expertise in knowledge, technology and current medications virtually
- Include Question & Answer sessions
- Virtual availability of medication/technology representatives to communicate with participants
- Evaluations were used to identify participants intent to change practice and suggestions for future topics
- Award CME’s, CNE’s, CPE’s, and MOC hours

## Attendees



## Program Evaluation

- Evaluations showed that over 90% of nurses improved their knowledge as a result of the symposium
- 100% of the nurses reported intent to change their practice
- The consistent attendance each year supports the continued need for this program
- Prior needs analysis suggested the use of MOC hours to improve physician attendance and implementation of this proved that it was effective
- Rapid need to transition to a virtual conference in a limited time led to lack of implementation of pre and post surveys that could have been used to evaluate the impact of the instructional program and the participant’s knowledge before and after conference

## Conclusion

- This Diabetes Symposium has been a successful event and model for the effective delivery of diabetes related knowledge over the past 16 years
- Virtual Platforms have helped reimagine the way that conferences are delivered and prove that innovation and technology are an important part of healthcare
- Safe delivery of education in a virtual platform was provided by organizers & Diabetes Educators despite COVID-19 environment and limited time
- Physician participation was increased by providing MOC hours based on prior needs analysis
- Virtual conference venue kept cost affordable, which attracted a large and multi-disciplinary audience
- Virtual and hybrid delivery platforms reflect a current trend for the delivery of education at this time and in the foreseeable future
- Symposiums need to be re-evaluated for improvements
- Nursing attendance should be increased as they are the primary providers of patients in the hospital