

**Subject: Monday Motivation from Our Family Clinic (October 29, 2018)** [View in your browser](#)

# DETROIT IT

## A PATH TO BETTER HEALTH

She found it through Google, while searching for “free clinic in Detroit.” We’re so grateful for the algorithm that brought Patricia Wells to the [SAY Detroit Family Health Clinic](#).

A nurse practitioner born in Detroit, Wells began volunteering at the clinic in January 2012 after earning her degree from the University of Phoenix. She now works at the clinic in a role she describes as a “change agent,” helping Detroiters on a path to better health.

And that means being hands-on in her approach. Take, for example, the patient she is helping to quit smoking. Each Monday – nicknamed “Motivation Monday” – Wells checks in with her patient by phone as part of the intensive smoking cessation action plan they built together.



A holistic philosophy towards health care is necessary in a community like Detroit, where social determinants such as economic instability and illiteracy, poor housing, lack of efficient transportation, institutional racism, and limited access to healthy foods can affect health as much if not more than genetic predispositions. A hallmark of the SAY Clinic is a staff that exhibits cultural competence; that is, the ability of its providers to effectively deliver health care services that meet the social, cultural, and linguistic needs of its patients. That awareness and attitude is what makes it possible to prioritize health basics, like providing prescriptions for vegetables through its relationship with the Buckets of Rain nonprofit garden just across the street.

Important, too, is the role that nurse practitioners play in primary care services. After becoming a registered nurse, Wells excelled in travel nursing, which offered flexibility and an opportunity to see the world. An assignment in West Virginia, however, brought into stark relief the acute needs of underserved communities without access to quality health care. In fact, the American Medical Association predicts the U.S. is expected to experience a shortage of up to 120,000 physicians by 2030. Nurse practitioners can provide a viable solution to the shortage, but Michigan state law does not currently allow them to practice autonomously. However, under physicians at SAY Clinic, Wells is able to provide her patient-centered care for an urban community, free of charge.

Opened in 2008, the SAY Clinic is recognized as the nation's first free medical clinic devoted to homeless, uninsured and underinsured mothers and their children. It averages over 4,000 patient visits annually without regard to patients' income or ability to pay for services. It is privately funded through philanthropic efforts of SAY Detroit and does not receive any payment or reimbursement from the government.

**Learn more about its efforts and services, and how you can support as a donor or volunteer [here](#).**