

Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA)
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Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia's Life Coach Program

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Marta Figueroa ended up in the Emergency Room with severe abdominal pain and no insurance. Told she might have cancer, Marta's family was terrified. Marta had no primary care doctor to turn to so her Emergency Room physician asked Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia (CCEVA) Life Coach, Vanessa Dunlap, who works in the Emergency Department (ED), to assist Marta's family.

Vanessa helped Marta find a primary care option that was affordable and accessible. Next, she was able to get Marta an appointment to be seen by a specialist within days. Vanessa also helped Marta and her family apply for help so that their staggering medical bills could be reduced. Vanessa made sure Marta could get to the appointment and called her frequently to make sure all of her medical needs were being met. Thankfully, Marta did not have cancer and she is healthy and back to work. Marta not only has primary care but also has insurance for her and her family.

CCEVA's Life Coaches serve uninsured and underinsured patients who have come to the Emergency Department for primary care concerns and medication refills because they lack primary care. The program encouraged patients to better manage chronic diseases, such as diabetes and high blood pressure, and to receive ongoing care to improve the quality of their health and their life. Many patients are also connected to area resources for concerns such as acquiring clothing, food, and financial assistance. Last year, CCEVA's Life Coaches served 2,267 patients in three area hospitals with a 99% success rate – 2,243 patients did not return to the Emergency Department for primary care. In July 2015, the Life Coach Program will begin at Chesapeake Regional Hospital, CCEVA's fourth and largest hospital receiving life-changing intervention through the program.