

# Helen's Story

*Helen is just one of the many reasons TCCH strives to deliver exceptional care and support services while eliminating health care disparities.*

Helen, age 63, is one of approximately 29 million non-elderly Americans falling through the cracks in the United States health care system.

Her husband's employer covered Helen until he passed away. She then found herself too young for Medicare, and not earning enough money to qualify for the Affordable Care Act. Helen's chance for Medicaid coverage disappear when Florida did not expand eligibility earlier this year. Her current income is just enough to cover living expenses and that does not include paying for private health insurance.

Four years ago, physicians at TCCH's Fellsmere location diagnosed Helen with uncontrolled diabetes. This complication of the disease causes unstable blood glucose levels that swing from very high to very low, impacting quality of life and possible hospitalization. Helen, already on a limited fixed income,



*Pharmacy technician, Jalecia, hands Helen insulin syringes, free to any TCCH insulin dependent patient.*

found herself in need of medicine she could not afford.

When Helen spoke to the TCCH Fellsmere pharmacy team about her situation, they helped her fill out paperwork to receive free insulin through a federal Patient Assistance Program. She also receives free insulin supplies through TCCH. "If I had to pay for the insulin, I would probably go without. I don't think I'd be around if it wasn't for this program," Helen said. The pharmacy team also contacts Helen when her prescriptions need refilled, "They are so nice and easy to work with. They know the medications and call about refills instead of me remembering."

The Fellsmere location's on-site pharmacy creates a one-stop center for health care needs. Furthermore, all TCCH locations are on the GoLine bus route. Helen sometimes gets a ride from a friend, but she usually takes the bus, "It's really good. I don't have to depend on people to drive me. All I say is, 'I want to go to TCCH' and they take me."

TCCH is a nonprofit, providing comprehensive, high-quality health care to more than 26,000 insured, underinsured and uninsured patients. TCCH, Indian River County's only Federally Qualified Health Center, has eight locations providing medical, vision, dental, behavioral health, and pharmacy services. TCCH offers a sliding fee discount based on household income and family size. For more information, visit [tcchinc.org](http://tcchinc.org) or call 772-257-8224.