

Straight Talk

A weekly update from management on the issues that matter most



May 9, 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

“*You are what you eat,*” is what my high school wrestling coach used to tell us as we tried to make weight and stay in pristine physical condition. Today, decades later, “*You are what you eat*” is the NCH rallying cry as we combat the epidemic of obesity with awareness, education, and most importantly, using a new tool called MyFitnessPal (www.MyFitnessPal.com) to change our habits.

This easy-to-use “app” tracks all the major food factors: Calories, fat, protein, carbohydrates, sugar, fiber, cholesterol, and more. Now anyone with a personal handheld device can scan bar codes on the foods in our cafeterias, or select from one of the more than 1.8 million foods already in the MyFitnessPal database, which is updated daily. This innovative tool also facilitates tracking of exercise with more than 350 types of training from cardio to strength already programmed; allowing us to match real-time our personal objectives for weight loss and maintenance of physical fitness against what we actually accomplish.

Having progressed so far into the digital age, we must take advantage of all the tools we now have, rather than being seduced into poor health by the convenience of remote TV clickers, video games, processed foods, sugared drinks, and far-too convenient snacks.

Research indicates that folks sharing their MyFitnessPal experience with friends lose, on average, three times the weight than others who use more traditional methods. To motivate you, daily reports, summaries of all major nutrients consumed, and calories expended with exercise are instantly available. And I speak from experience; I’ve been using MyFitnessPal for the past few weeks, trying to improve my dietary habits. So far, I’m still on a learning curve.

In addition to MyFitnessPal, our von Arx Center has also just completed its sixth “*Healthy Weight*” 12-week program with an average of twenty-five pounds of weight loss per participant through diet and exercise. One highlight of the program, beyond having a supportive set of teammates and a Wellness membership for twelve weeks, is a trip to the supermarket with an experienced dietician to guide one down the aisles, avoiding food traps and navigating good choices.

Even though Naples/Marco Island reportedly has the fifth least number of obese people in our nation ([Gallup Poll on Obesity](#)), as well as the longest life expectancy for women and second longest for men (according to the May *National Geographic* magazine), we still have room for improvement. One goal for southwest Florida is to become the healthiest community in the nation; a so-called “*Blue Zone,*” where life expectancy increases 10 years more than expected.

And if you can’t do it yourself, we are prepared to care for you. CNO **Michele Thoman** reports that many of our cardiology nurses volunteered recently for a two-day weekend, eight-hour exam prep class for cardiovascular certification. We now have 28 certified RNs ([Certified Cardiovascular RNs](#)) in this specialty. What an outstanding commitment they have made to their professional development, to their patients and NCH. Just one more reason NCH has the best nursing care and the best cardiac care, as together we fight the insidious disease of obesity.

NCH’s goal is to care for our community and ultimately migrate from sickness to wellness. Imagine not needing to be hospitalized—granted, no institution would be profiting from the misfortune of the sick, but our community and nation would be so much better off.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allen".

Allen S. Weiss, M.D., President and CEO

P.S. DO YOU HAVE A COLLEAGUE OR FRIEND WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THESE UPDATES?

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