



CHIP Program Improves Health of Employee

It's costing lives. It's costing money and Americans have been battling the bulge for decades—yet we are more obese than ever. Living in the 21st Century, people have a greater knowledge about diet and health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels, but for Deanna Jarvis, a SwedishAmerican Health System employee, her decision to pursue a healthier lifestyle came from good old-fashioned organization and peer support, and an offer that she couldn't pass up.

"The main reason why I signed up for the CHIP program this past March was because of the incredible offer, support and commitment that SwedishAmerican has made to see that its employees are healthy," said Deanna.

Deanna's story began to take shape after she completed the first CHIP session. But it wasn't until she received her pre-CHIP lab work that she said to herself, "It's time. Take control." Deanna realized that if her health was going to improve, she was going to have to make a commitment and give the program a chance.

"It's always been a goal of mine to stop taking the blood pressure medication that I have been taking for the past five years. My mother had a kidney transplant after years of untreated and uncontrolled high blood pressure. I didn't want to go through what she had to go through," she said.

By focusing on her nutrition, fitness and changing lifestyle behaviors, Deanna felt this was the balanced approach she needed to improve her health. Much to her surprise, in less than a month's time, Deanna was able to stop taking her blood pressure medication completely. In addition, she lowered her heart rate and cholesterol level by 72 points.

As improvement results go, Deanna knows that she has won the battle, but not the war. She knows that things can change at any time if she does not make the right nutritional choices. She said, "Early on in the program my husband said 'It's all just a matter of making a decision to do it.'" For Deanna, it wasn't quit that simple. She says, "It's like making a hundred decisions a day; do I really want to put that Suzy-Q in my body; do I really want to get up and exercise? What I learned during the CHIP program really had an impact on the answers to those questions."

The bottom line is that Deanna feels better. "All of the positive affects make the good decisions much easier. I like that I can play with my granddaughter without any aches and pains. I like that I can go up a flight of stairs without slowing down and catching my breath at the top. I like that my clothes fit better, and I like that my heart disease risk factors virtually disappear," she said.



Deanna Jarvis, supervisor, patient registration