



# Wellness Matters

January 2012

The wellness newsletter of the Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust

## HEALTHY HAPPENINGS

### BIGGEST LOSER WEIGHT LOSS CHALLENGE

Wednesday, January 4 – Sunday, March 7, 2012

Get on track in the New Year! Employees participate in this challenge on their own, but are given a program guide full of helpful information. Weekly tips will be provided and this year we will add a weekly fitness challenge and 2 last chance workouts...both can be done at home!

The 5 BIGGEST LOSERS, by percentage of body weight lost, will receive a \$50 gift card. In addition, each employee or family member who loses 5% of their body weight will earn a white long sleeve Wellness Program T-shirt (that's 9 lbs on a 180lb starting weight). As added incentive, a midpoint weigh-in will be offered and each person who has lost 3% of their body weight will go into a drawing for a \$50 gift card.

You must weigh in and weigh out. Your weight and participation in this program is not shared with anyone. Weigh-in at one of the following locations or with your staff nurse and have it reported to Amy:

LPVEC Brush Hill, Wed, 1/4, 10:45-11:30am

Longmeadow Community House, Thurs, 1/5, 9-10am

East Longmeadow Town Hall, Thurs, 1/5, 10:15-11:15am

Hampden Town Hall, Thurs, 1/5, 12-12:45pm

Wilbraham Town Hall, Thurs, 1/5 1:15-2pm

### QUIT SMOKING YOUR WAY... AND WE'LL PICK UP THE TAB

If you are thinking of quitting smoking in the New Year the SVRHT Wellness Program wants to help you in any way it can. We realize that there are lots of different ways that people choose to quit...so do what works for you. Not only will we cover the cost of any safe quitting method, but employees and family members who stay quit are eligible for up to \$100 in additional cash incentives.

#### OPTIONS

1. Make an appointment at a FREE Nicotine Patch Giveaway:

Wed., 1/4, 3-5, Longmeadow Community House

Thurs., 1/5, 4-6, Wilbraham Town Hall

2. Pick up Prescription Nicotine Patches, Chantix or Zyban from your health care provider and we'll reimburse the copay.

3. Register for a Freedom From Smoking program at a local hospital or Freedom From Smoking Online and we will reimburse the cost of the program.

4. Quit Cold Turkey or pose another option.

**YOU MUST REGISTER IN ORDER  
TO RECEIVE  
REIMBURSEMENT AND INCENTIVES.**

**This newsletter has 2 pages.**

### NEW! Lower Your BMI and Earn \$100

BMI (Body Mass Index) is a useful measure of overweight and obesity. It is calculated from your height and weight. BMI is an estimate of body fat and a good gauge of your risk for diseases that can occur with more body fat. The higher your BMI, the higher your risk for certain diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, gallstones, breathing problems, and certain cancers.

Each person who goes from a BMI over 30 to a BMI under 25 will earn a \$50 gift card. If that level is maintained for 6 months another \$50 gift card will be awarded. There is no time limit to reach this goal and participants will be given guidelines to encourage healthy weight loss. Schedule an appointment to weigh in with Amy at any time or attend one of the Biggest Loser weigh-ins.

Review the following link to learn more about BMI: <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi/>

### PROGRAM REGISTRATION

Contact Amy Higgins, Wellness Coordinator, at 847-0249 or amyhiggins2003@yahoo.com.

**Coming in February:**

**Wear Red Day and**

**Other Healthy Heart Activities**

## What is the SVRHT Wellness Program?

The Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust was formed in the early 1990's in an attempt to regionalize health care coverage and reduce costs. The Trust is a consortium of 6 political entities, which include the towns of East Longmeadow, Hampden, Longmeadow and Wilbraham, the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District and the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative.

The Trust is able to offer a variety of health plans to their employees. Most of the plans are "self funded" by the trust. That is, the premium employees pay increases and decreases annually depending on the trust's experience and the use of the system. The more the costs, the more the trust pays.

For years the SVRHT board had been looking at wellness programs as a way to reduce or contain costs. If a heart attack can be prevented, for instance, it costs the trust less. While the various health plans (Blue Cross Blue Shield MA, Tufts and Health New England) had offered screenings and occasional smoking cessation and walking programs, the offerings had been sporadic and often not well attended.

Have you heard "them" say, "timing is everything"? As the trust was researching this option of a comprehensive wellness program, the Town of Longmeadow and the trust received a grant through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in May of 2008. The \$50,000 grant was intended to hire a part-time Wellness Coordinator and fund wellness initiatives through the end of fiscal year 2009.

While the grant was not re-funded for FY 2010, the wellness program has been privately funded by the trust and has had measurable success in helping employees quit smoking, lose weight, participate in regular preventative screenings and reduce stress. It is the trust's hope and expectation that a regional and self-funded approach to health care, coupled with this comprehensive wellness program will continue to help improve general health and contain costs. The more employees who participate in the wellness programs, the more success the program will achieve- health care costs are directly related to the health of employees.

## Ongoing Wellness Benefits, Incentives and Discounts

Employees with Blue Cross Blue Shield and Health New England Health Plans may be eligible for up to \$150 for fitness or weight loss reimbursements. In addition, all employees-insured or not- are eligible for ongoing wellness discounts and incentives. Please visit <http://www.scantichealth.org/resources.htm#wellness-info> for more details.



## Tips for Safe Snow Shoveling

- **Warm-up your muscles.** Shoveling can be a vigorous activity. Before you begin this physical workout, warm-up your muscles for 10 minutes with light exercise.
- **Pace yourself.** Snow shoveling and snow blowing are aerobic activities. Take frequent breaks and prevent dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids. If you experience chest pain, shortness of breath, or other signs of a heart attack, stop the activity and seek emergency care.
- **Proper equipment.** Use a shovel that is comfortable for your height and strength. Do not use a shovel that is too heavy or too long for you. Space your hands on the tool grip to increase your leverage.
- **Proper lifting.** Try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift, do it properly. Squat with your legs apart, knees bent, and back straight. Lift with your legs. Do not bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk to where you want to dump it. Holding a shovelful of snow with your arms outstretched puts too much weight on your spine. Never remove deep snow all at once. Do it in pieces.
- **Safe technique.** Do not throw the snow over your shoulder or to the side. This requires a twisting motion that stresses your back.

All municipal employees in Hampden, Wilbraham, HWRSD, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow and LPVEC may participate in any of the programs listed in any location. Family members and friends are also invited to participate.



Scantic Valley Regional Health Trust