

Lifestyle Balance Program rejuvenates Carol Feller Brady's health



Carol Feller Brady has been a health advocate for years, but it took joining SEARHC's Lifestyle Balance Program last January to rejuvenate her own health.

"I don't know where the energy comes from," said Brady, who turns 80 on Jan. 1.

Joining the Lifestyle Balance Program —part of a national campaign for Alaska Natives and American Indians with prediabetes —showed Brady the importance of good nutrition and physical activity. She said the program gave her enough endurance to dance with several groups during Celebration 2006 and to keep up with two grandchildren during a trip to New Jersey and Washington, D.C., that involved a lot of walking.

"I've never felt better. It got me feeling just right," said Brady, a writer whose autobiography *"Through the Storm, Towards the Sun"* recently was reprinted.

Brady drank a lot and smoked when she was younger, but not anymore. She has Grave's disease (a thyroid disease) and partial blindness. Recently she found out she has prediabetes, a condition that comes before diabetes where blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not at diabetes levels.

Making a few simple lifestyle changes can help people with prediabetes delay or avoid getting diabetes. The Lifestyle Balance Program holds two 16-week classes a year to teach Natives with prediabetes to be more physically active and to eat healthier food. Rocky Plotnick and Sarah Paddock lead the Lifestyle Balance Program in Juneau, and Brady still consults with them even though her class ended in May. SEARHC dietitian Lisa Nicklow refined Brady's diet and Brady walks 30 minutes a day to stay active.

"I wake up in the morning and I feel good, my stomach feels good," Brady said.

Brady has a long association with wellness and SEARHC. She was Wrangell's community health representative and later Wrangell's representative on the SEARHC Board of Directors. Now in Juneau, Brady is involved in several SEARHC health promotion events and this summer she helped rekindle the Eagles vs. Ravens Wellness Challenge. On top of everything else, she's very involved with ANS Camp 2.

"There are too many people not taking care of themselves," Brady said. *"What you eat is important. Prevention is even more important. I'm a big-time advocate of prevention now. It's how I improved my health."*

An important message from the President



Over the years much has been said about patient rights. But little has been said about patient responsibility.

About 70 cents of every dollar spent on health care in the United States goes toward illnesses and chronic health conditions that could be prevented. Roughly half of all deaths are due to preventable illnesses.

That's why SEARHC encourages people to commit to small lifestyle changes — such as quitting tobacco, eating a healthy diet and getting 30 minutes of physical activity each day — that can mean major improvements to your health. Your best health care provider is yourself.

At SEARHC, our health promotion staff has been working with local businesses to create employee wellness programs, which help employees feel better and be more productive workers while saving the businesses and employees significant costs on health care. We're also working with local school districts to create school wellness plans, so our youth learn healthy habits that will last them a lifetime.

SEARHC endorses these workplace and school wellness programs because they give people the tools to be healthy. As we enter a new year, I encourage you to use these tools to take charge of your own wellness. This simple effort will return a lifetime of benefits.

Ken Brewer

Alternate health resources help SEARHC provide improved services

It's a myth that the funds supplied by the Indian Health Service cover all of the costs of Native health care. That's why patients are asked if they qualify for alternative health resources when they visit SEARHC facilities.

Some SEARHC patients may have private insurance from work or their spouse. Others may qualify for federal and state assistance programs such as Denali KidCare, veteran status, Medicaid, Medicare or workman's compensation. If a patient is eligible for one of these programs, but hasn't applied, SEARHC can help with the application process.

SEARHC reinvests the money it receives from alternate health resources into providing more services or new infrastructure, such as the MRI machine in Sitka, a pediatrician in Juneau, specialty clinics and new clinics where older ones needed improvement. If a pediatric patient gets hurt and needs a medevac to Anchorage, SEARHC can save several thousands of dollars by billing Denali KidCare for the flight.

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"If we can bring that money back into the system it means we can use the money for other services," Patient Access Manager Bill Anderson said. "It can mean continuing programs or adding to them. In some cases, because of alternate health resources we've been able to expand services."

Patients with questions about alternate health resources can call their local clinics, Crystal Mitchell in Sitka at 966-8307 or Charlene Sykes in Juneau at 364-4465. ❖



Privacy regulations allow patients to opt out of directory

Whenever a patient checks into Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital, federal privacy regulations — called the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) — allow the patient to opt out of the hospital's directory. Each patient is asked if he or she wants to be included in the directory when admitted to the hospital.

If you, as the patient, decide to be included in the directory it means your family and friends who call the hospital and ask for you will be transferred to your room, your family and friends visiting the hospital will be directed to your floor, your family and friends who call and ask will be told your general condition (stable, guarded, critical), and your family and friends call and ask they will be told you are a patient in the hospital.

However, if you decide to opt out of the directory your family and friends who call or visit the hospital will be told you are not listed as a patient. It also means any flowers and/or cards sent to you will not be delivered.

For family and friends of patients who opt out of the directory, please do not be upset if you call Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and are told an individual isn't listed as a patient. Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital staff are complying with federal privacy regulations because that individual decided not to be included in the directory. ❖



Dental mission provides services to Himalayan villages



Chuck Hazen inspects a Buddhist monk teeth while Linda Moonan assists and other monks watch and wait for their turn.

Four current or former SEARHC employees recently spent three weeks providing dental services to remote villages in the Himalayan Mountains of India.

The group included SEARHC Director of Dental Services Dr. Tom Bornstein, DDS, of Juneau; Dr. Chuck Hazen, DDS, of Haines; dental assistant Linda Moonan of Haines and recently retired George Figdor of Haines, who last worked for SEARHC in Corporate Communications. They traveled in October and November as part of a medical team with the non-profit Himalayan Health Exchange.

Working conditions were primitive for the group, and Dr. Bornstein said they worked by headlight, *“without the benefit of electricity, running water, suction, x-rays or adjustable chairs.”* But he also said *“the trip was a wonderful and wonder-filled experience.”*

The group treated up to 50 patients a day, often working until darkness forced them to stop. In addition to treating problem teeth, the group distributed toothbrushes and taught the villagers flossing, using embroidery thread because no dental floss was available.

“The dental surgery was tough enough, but without the hard work and effort on the part of Linda and George we never would have been able to complete the work we faced,” Dr. Hazen said. *“They had to set up, clean up and keep rotating our instruments through the ‘momo pot’ (a Tibetan dumpling cooker used as a sterilizer) so we could keep up with the patients. Their efforts were extraordinary.”*

While modern conveniences hadn't arrived in most of the villages, the modern sugar-laden diet had. Dr. Hazen said many of the Himalayans were *“really hooked on sweets”* and the average 10-year-old needed at least one molar removed, a rare occurrence in the U.S.

“Every tooth we took out was abscessed,” Moonan said. *“These people were suffering, with no other options. I felt like we were doing really good things.”*

“Almost all of the patients we saw had acute dental pain,” Dr. Bornstein said. *“Some had walked for hours from surrounding villages to see us. The patients, translators and villagers were so gracious, appreciative and welcoming that the difficult working conditions and almost impassable roads seemed like minor issues.”* ❖

Community Wellness Advocate program wins state award

The Community Wellness Advocate program — a cooperative effort of SEARHC Health Promotion and the University of Alaska Southeast-Sitka Campus — in December was honored with the Barbara Berger Award for excellence in health education and health promotion in Alaska. The Alaska Health Education Consortium presented the award.

The CWA program is modeled after the state's Community Health Aide program that trains village health workers, but the CWA program is geared more toward disease prevention and health behavior change than clinical work. Since the program is taught using distance delivery, students are able to remain in their home communities except for two trips to Sitka that last one week each.

“The Community Wellness Advocate program is an ideal example of what excellence in health education and health promotion in Alaska is all about,” said Stephanie Allen, President of the Alaska Health Education Consortium and Executive Director of Alaska Health Fair, Inc. *“The CWA program trains community health educators and health promoters who then are able to implement programs in their communities. It has proven to be very successful addressing areas like cardiovascular health, nutrition, tobacco use and injury prevention. It addresses a missing element and fills that need.”*

The CWA program began as a regional program in Southeast Alaska in 1998 that offered four three-credit classes over one academic year, but it expanded to a statewide program in 2001. The program now offers a 30-credit cer-



Community Wellness Advocates (L - R) former students Litia Garrison, Janice Huls, and instructors Kathy O’Gara, Doug Osborne, and Lisa Sadleir-Hart.

tificate that can be applied to an associate degree in health sciences. In addition to the 12-credit core CWA program, there also are two specialty tracks for community nutrition and injury prevention. Currently under development is a third specialty track focused on health promotion with elders.

“The Community Wellness Advocate training program was the brainchild of Tlingit elder and longtime health promoter Phil Moreno, who passed away this spring,” said SEARHC Community and Employee Wellness Coordinator Lisa Sadleir-Hart, who also serves as the CWA Program Coordinator. *“He had the vision of a community health promoter in every Alaskan community who would work alongside Community Health Aides and Community Family Service Workers, and they would provide services focused on the prevention of disease and promotion of community assets that were health-enhancing.”*

For more information on the CWA program, contact Lisa Sadleir-Hart at 966-8735 or look on the Web at <http://www.searhc.org/cwa/>. A list of previous winners of the Barbara Berger Award can be found on the Web at <http://www.ahecalaska.org/marketing.html>. ❖



Around the Consortium

Prince of Wales Island

◆ SEARHC and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service will be starting a new youth first responder team on POW that's modeled after the Sitka Youth First Responders. In January, a local coordinator will be hired who will organize the program and recruit youth ages 14-18 interested in earning their Emergency Trauma Technician certificates and serving the community as first responders. For information, contact Bill Winslow at 966-8844 or wwill@searhc.org.

◆ Alicia Roberts Medical Center will be offering "A New You: Health For Every Body," a new program designed to promote healthy eating and active living in all people, regardless of size. The program features four four-hour sessions from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays starting Jan. 27. Registration closes on Jan. 18 and the class size is limited. Participants are asked to pay \$20 for a book and supplies, but \$10 will be refunded on successful completion of the course. For information, contact June May at 755-4959 or Brenda Isaacs at 755-4983.

Juneau

SEARHC Juneau Health Promotion is teaming up with Bartlett Regional Hospital, the State of Alaska Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention program, KTOO-FM, the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service and the SouthEast Regional Resource Center (SERRC-Alaska's Educational Resource Center) to work on a cardiovascular health project targeting women and children of Gruening Park Subdivision. The project kicked off in November with a Thanksgiving feast. SEARHC will provide educational material and training over the next year to help the Gruening Park community take small steps to a healthier life.

Klukwan/Juneau/Klawock

The SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program recently awarded three \$15,000 grants to Klukwan School, Klawock School and Yaakoosgé Daakahídi Alternative High School in Juneau so they can make improvements to school nutrition and physical activity programs. Yaakoosgé used its grant to hire an additional PE teacher and offer seven new PE classes and a new school store menu. Klukwan and Klawock both will use their grants to introduce the SPARK PE program, with Klukwan adding a lifelong learning program and Klawock partnering with Alicia Roberts Medical Center to offer a health and wellness fair. Another round of grants will be awarded in the near future. For information on how your school district can apply, contact Tia Patterson at 966-8629.

Regionwide

◆ January is Cervical Health Awareness Month and the SEARHC Breast and Cervical Health Program would like to remind women they should have a Pap test and pelvic exam at least once every year starting by age 21. They also should be screened for the Human Papillomavirus (HPV). For information, contact your local SEARHC clinic or call 1-800-833-8782 (toll-free in Alaska).

◆ February is American Heart Month and the SEARHC WISEWOMAN will be hosting several activities during February about women's cardiovascular health. Each of the SEARHC WISEWOMAN locations will celebrate National Wear Red Day on Feb. 2, and other heart health events will take place during the month. For information, contact your local SEARHC clinic or call 1-800-833-8782 (toll-free in Alaska).

◆ January is New Year's resolution time and many Southeast Alaska residents will choose to quit tobacco in 2007. The SEARHC Breath For Life Tobacco Quit Program can help you quit by offering one-on-one counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy products (such as patches and gum/lozenges). For information, call the SEARHC Breath For Life program during business hours at 1-888-966-8875 (toll-free in Alaska).✦



Patient Tip: Small steps lead to better health

This is the time of year for New Year's resolutions, and one of the most common resolutions is improving your health.

Taking just a few small steps can make a big difference in better health. Here are 10 to get you started for the new year. Take these and other small steps and you will have more energy and you'll feel better.

- ◆ **Walk instead of driving whenever you can.**
- ◆ **Avoid food portions larger than your fist.**
- ◆ **Grill, steam or bake your food instead of frying.**
- ◆ **Make time in your day for physical activity.**
- ◆ **Exercise to a video if the weather is bad.**
- ◆ **Don't eat late at night.**
- ◆ **Use brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.**
- ◆ **Try a green salad instead of French fries.**
- ◆ **Take your dog on longer walks.**
- ◆ **Drink water or diet soda instead of regular soda.**

A longer list of small steps to better health can be found at http://smallstep.gov/sm_steps/sm_steps_index.html. ✦



Find it @ www.searhc.org

The SEARHC Foundation changes its name

The organization that helps SEARHC beneficiaries with unmet medical needs has a new name, the Healing Hand Foundation.

The mission of the Healing Hand Foundation is the same as it was when it was known as The SEARHC Foundation, providing small grants for durable medical goods, pharmaceuticals and patient travel that might not be covered by other resources.

The new name will help eliminate confusion with the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC). SEARHC remains a strong supporter of the Healing Hand Foundation, but the two organizations are separate and have different boards.

For more information about the Foundation, go to www.searhc.org/common/pages/foundation/.

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