

'Healthification' to bring habits home

Health care professionals are experts when it comes to healing the human body, yet they often neglect to practice the very matra they preach.

The staggering reality is that three of the four states where Mercy serves rank in the top nine nationwide for highest adult obesity rates. According to the most recent report by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma have a prevalence of obesity equal to or greater than 30 percent and Kansas only better than at 28 percent.

So, with that in mind, Mercy is promoting stronger, healthier lifestyles by its more than 36,000 co-workers through an initiative known as "Healthification." The plan supports a well-balanced life, which includes nutrition, physical activity, emotional and spiritual well-being, and smoking cessation. As a first step, Mercy is partner-

ing with NuVal, a nutritional scoring system, to help co-workers and customers make informed decisions.

Mercy co-workers, patients and families will be able to utilize the NuVal scoring system to determine the nutritional value of food purchased in cafeterias throughout Mercy.

"Working in a hospital, we see people every day who are very unhealthy," said Chuck Trudo, night nursing supervisor for Mercy Medical Center, Rogers, Ark. "About a year ago, I realized I was headed down the same path. I was falling into some poor lifestyle habits and gaining weight. I've made some changes since, and Mercy is making it easier for me to stay on track."

NuVal was developed by an independent team of nutrition and medical experts affiliated with Yale University School of Medicine. The team worked for

Continued to NUVAL, Page 9

work force will bolster our competitiveness and economic development."

Canadian County gets a boost

TSET's board of directors recently renewed more than \$4.8 million in Communities of Excellence in Tobacco Control program grants to 24 coalitions serving 38 counties and one tribal nation. In addition, 13 counties received new grants, among them Canadian County.

Canadian County Coalition for Children and Family chair Rebecca Baker said the organization received \$75,000 as part of the Communities of Excellence program. The coalition works with the Canadian County Health Department to promote tobacco prevention efforts in the county, Baker said.

"We are very excited about receiving this grant," she said. "We are working to create healthy, smoke-free environments for our children. We are encouraging tobacco users to quit for their own health as well as for their loved ones. We are dedicated to these goals and we will succeed."

Lauren Greenfield, the county's tobacco prevention coordinator, pointed to both the personal and economic effects of smoking.

"When you consider the economic impact to Canadian County, the numbers are staggering," Greenfield said. "Tobacco use not only kills our friends and

family members, it is harming our way of life and hampering future growth in our communities."

"The local community efforts across Oklahoma are beginning to have a profound impact on the devastating effects of commercial tobacco use," said Tracey Strader, executive director of TSET. "The legacy of tobacco will not be defined by its huge economic toll on our state, but rather by the work being done by concerned individuals and coalitions that realize the importance of healthy lives and healthy environments in which we all work and play."

Reducing costs

Businesses can take actions to improve the health of their employees. Simple steps, such as making business properties tobacco-free, and offering health insurance that covers tobacco cessation can improve the bottom line. More and more businesses are also participating in the Oklahoma Certified Healthy Business program sponsored by The Academy for State Goals, the Oklahoma Turning Point Council, The State Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

"In addition, other states have proven that tobacco use can be reduced by implementing effective policies and programs at the local and state levels," Oklahoma Health Commissioner Dr. Terry Cline said. "However,

Costs from Page 7



When it comes to smoking stats, Oklahoma is not 'OK'

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, statewide, Oklahoma has among the worst percentages of smokers — both adults and youth ages 12 through 17 years.

Oklahoma ranks 48th among all states, with 13.3 percent of youth identified as smokers. Averages nationwide range from 6.5 percent to 15.9 percent.

Almost 25 percent of the state's adult population smoke.

CDC officials estimate 677,000 people are current smokers, bringing the state a 47th ranking. Across the country, states averaged between 9.3 percent and 26.5 percent.

There are places to get help when trying to quit. Some resources include:

- ▶ www.StopsWithMe.com
- ▶ www.strongand-healthy.ok.gov
- ▶ Oklahoma tobacco helpline - 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

until laws put in place by the tobacco industry in the 1980s and '90s are repealed and local rights are returned to communities, cities and towns in Oklahoma are prohibited from passing local tobacco prevention ordinances that would protect their citizens and create a healthier work force.

"Not allowing communities to produce a healthier work force puts us at a competitive disadvantage in the fight for jobs and a growing economy," he said.

Even though smoking rates are high, the good news is that three out of four Oklahoma smokers want to quit. Serious quit attempts in the state are at an all-time high. While many successfully quit on their own, receive services through health

insurance or by talking to their doctor, there are also a variety of free services available for those who are seeking advice on quitting, including the Oklahoma tobacco helpline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

"Not only is tobacco use taking a personal toll through disease and death, the associated costs are killing the economic growth of our communities and the state," Cline said. "From businesses to communities to individuals, each of us has a role to play in improving the lives and livelihoods of all Oklahomans by preventing and reducing tobacco use."

For more information about tobacco prevention, call Greenfield at the Canadian County Health Department, 262-0042.

Quit from Page 7



With the approach of the 2011 Lent season, White has another plan related to his former smoking days.

"I gained about 22 pounds and I'm going to pledge to have a healthier lifestyle."

White said when he felt some stress in his life, he plucked a cigarette from a pack and lit it.

"Now I pick up a candy bar and that's where the 22 pounds came from," he said.

White is walking in the mornings, and he joined the Weight Watchers program. He said he would like to find a more strenuous form of exercise, such as a stationary treadmill.

"I'm losing about 3 pounds a week. I walk around town in the mornings, which I really enjoy."

White's life math has added up. By subtracting, he's added to his life expectancy.

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In the know

Bank of Union gives some advice for following financial resolutions

New Year's is the time for resolutions, but any time is a good time to start with better financial planning.

Bank of Union President John Shelley and his staff came up with some tips to make those plans stick.

I'm going to save for retirement:

Establish an IRA account.

I'm going to keep my bills paid:

Schedule your bill payment online.

I'm going to get my debt under control:

Be fiscally responsible.

Continue to pay terms plus interest on credit card debt.

Consolidate and/or refinance.

I'm going to get on a budget:

Identify your spending.

Evaluate current spending and establish goals.

Track and monitor your spending.

NuVal
from Page 8



two years and put in place a patent-pending algorithm which converts complex nutritional information into a single, easy-to-use score.

More than 30 different nutrients and nutrition factors go into the score. The nutritional value of a food is ranked on a scale from 1 to 100: the higher the score, the more nutritious. In some cases, the findings can be surprising: a bowl of Cheerios has a higher nutritional value than some Kashi; and frozen green beans, canned no-salt green beans and fresh green beans have the same score of 100.

"Healthification is the mindful pursuit of well-being and Mercy is about making it easier for our co-workers and the people we serve every day to make these good decisions," said Lance Luria, MD, Mercy's health and wellness vice president and medical director. "What we know is that by making simple choices, we can dramatically affect our overall health.

If we want to optimize the value and joy we get out of life, we must eat for life, move for life, breathe for life, and

be emotionally and spiritually balanced for life, as our health and wellness truly depends on it."

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Success story

Confessions of a spendaholic

I have to admit it — I'm a spendaholic. Like some people are with alcohol, so it is for me with money.

The good news is I'm also a success story. While I'm not perfect in my spending habits, I've become fiscally responsible. The road was difficult and rocky, but the good news is that it's possible to get that monkey off your back.

Credit cards were too easy — too easy to use and too easy to get in that dilemma of not paying it off every month. Months would go by, and I would be paying more interest than principal, in a terrible cycle almost impossible to break.

If you read the book or saw the movie, "Confessions of a Shopaholic," and you have a spending problem, you probably could relate. But it's likely you know that, unlike the movie, getting out of a spending bind can be a lot harder than portrayed by Hollywood.

I've had dark times, caused at least in part because of my own poor financial choices, and sadly they didn't just affect me — they impacted my child, my parents and my friends.

Unfortunately, I'm not alone. While not all people end up in the financial straits I did, many have. Bankruptcies and foreclosures are at an all-time high in the United States, and while some people have simply fallen on bad times, others — yes, like me — made some poor choices.

Why am I sharing this with you? Because, hopefully, by sharing some of my experiences over the years, maybe one person will avoid some of the pitfalls I fell into, starting at a very young age and continuing on for a long time.

Beware of credit cards

As a college student, I was besieged by credit card offers, and the lure was too much for me — in I plunged.

The problem with someone of that

age having credit (unless they aren't trained or disciplined) is that it can quickly and easily get out of hand. Just because someone is beyond that age doesn't mean they're immune to the credit card trap. The deluge of ads offering "credit repair" services are testament to that.

If you can't pay it off in one month, DO NOT put it on a credit card. Wait, if possible, or find another, lower-interest way of financing a necessary purchase, such as car or home repairs.

Leave emotion at home (or off the Internet) when making large purchases

I am the quintessential impulse buyer. For years, if I was sad or upset, my first step would be to purchase something, invariably something I really didn't need. This extended from small items to cars.

My advice — If you're unhappy or upset, wait to make a purchase if you can. Spending money you don't have on something you most likely don't need will never, ever make you feel better. In fact, if you can't afford it, it will end up making you feel worse.

Be careful with Internet spending

Although I consider myself a "reformed" spendaholic and fairly savvy with the Internet, the truth is anyone can be fooled.

Auction sites can be great, and you can find tremendous values, but be careful about your purchasing activity there. Many, if not most, items don't come with any kind of warranty. If it breaks prematurely, you're done. That \$150 phone you got for \$100 on Ebay and which lasted three months probably wasn't such a deal after all.

Continued to
Spend, Page 10



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