

Women's Wellness Quarterly

Healthy Women, Healthy Families, Healthy West Virginia

WVU National Center of Excellence in Women's Health

September 2010
Volume 2 Issue 1



NCoEWH Update

By Elizabeth "Betty" Parsons

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Hard to believe the students are back in Morgantown, isn't it? It is always a sign that summer is over. We already notice the days are shorter. It is with a town full of activity and hope for greatness that we welcome fall. I hope you had a wonderful summer and look forward to the new challenges this new season brings.

Since our last Community Advisory Network meeting and newsletter, we have held two Women on Wellness (WOW) retreats: one in Bluefield, WV in May, reaching women in Mercer and McDowell counties and one in Fairmont on July 31st reaching to Harrison, Marion, Preston, Monongalia and beyond.

The Fairmont location was home to our first retreat and serves as our show case of growth. To that end the NCoEWH continually responds to new challenges and opportunities. Today slightly over 15% of our active duty military force are women. West Virginia alone has over 11,000 female veterans and the percentage of all women veterans is expected to be 17% over the next five years. Currently, 15% of the *total* population of WV is a veteran. The ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have put continuing stresses on military families. Large numbers of WV families are impacted. In the spring, as planning for the Fairmont retreat began in earnest, we entered into discussions with Atlas Research, LLC, (a service disabled veteran owned small business); on how the WOW model can be modified to reach women in the military.

Since the NCoEWH at WVU fully embraces its mission to serve all of West Virginia and in particular rural women, we are encouraged that our work with Atlas Research, LLC will provide us a vehicle to better address the needs of this special population of women. Our discussions with Atlas Resources resulted in the Fairmont WOW Retreat including a special reach to women in the military, those who are active duty, reserves, National Guard and veterans. We included a special panel discussion: "Rural Women, Rural Veterans, and The New Paradigm of Women as Warriors."

The panel moderator was Beverly Kirk, former local ABC News Anchor. Panel members included: Lilly Mae Columbo, US Navy Yeoman (Ret.), WWII Veteran Kay Battles, Capt. US Army Nurse Corps. (Ret), Vietnam Veteran, Dee DiBartolomeo, Capt. US Army Nurse Corps. (Ret), Vietnam Veteran, and Maj.

Gwendolyn Nerstad, WV National Guard, Personnel/Training Deputy Biometrics Identity Agency. Our lunch keynote speaker, Elizabeth J. Coffey, MA, LPC, LSW WV National Guard Director of Psychological Health spoke on Resiliency.

We look forward to our continued work with Hilda Heady and Atlas Resources as we broaden our reach to include women in the military.

We are currently working on the delivery of two additional retreats. The first will be held on October 16th in New Martinsville. This will be quickly followed by the 2nd in Lewisburg on October 22nd. Please look at our web site, www.wowicandoit.com for details.

Speaking of web sites and other social media, we developed a new web site to host the Women on Wellness Retreats. The site is appropriately called: www.wowicandoit.com. Please look at it to keep current with the progress and schedule of our Women on Wellness Retreats. We also have a Facebook page. If you are a Facebook user, please consider becoming a friend to us.

We seek to help our all West Virginians across our great state and our current and future health care providers to understand the role that women have in the health, wellbeing and economics of our state. We do this through community outreach, education, leadership skills, clinical care and research.

It is critically important that the health of the residents of West Virginia is improved. West Virginia is 47th in the nation in the number of adults who are overweight and/or obese. We are ranked as one of the lowest states for healthy behavior. The costs to our state for unhealthy lifestyles are more than just emotional.

One billion dollars is currently the price tag for obesity related health care spending in West Virginia. It is projected that in three years this number will double. We expect these numbers to increase exponentially over the next 5-10 years if we do not change.

The connection between rising rates of obesity and rising medical spending is undeniable. The bottom line is that without a reduction in obesity, major costs will continue to be imposed on our state. Although health reform may be necessary to address many problems in our current system, real savings are more likely to be achieved through reforms that reduce the prevalence of obesity and related risk factors. It is clear that we must make changes to our diets and level of activity if significant change is to be realized.

Alarmingly, these problems no longer exist primarily in our adult populations. Higher rates of obesity are starting to appear at younger and younger ages. Recently the students in the Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA) program conducted a survey across the state that looked at diabetes and obesity. The survey reported an alarming discrepancy in what we thought the current rates of diabetes and childhood obesity were. In fact, the survey found that 50% of underserved children in many areas of WV are obese. The diseases that result from being obese and overweight begin manifesting at about age 30-35. In 10-15 years, unless we can make positive lifestyle changes, we will have a majority of adults who will cost 42% more than someone not overweight

As Michelle Obama recently stated in her initiative to address childhood obesity, this problem is solvable. We do not need expensive new technology. We know that women lead their families. For the most part women are the ones who cook the meals, do the grocery shopping, make the health care appointments, and manage the social calendars of the family, including after school programs and extracurricular activities.

The NCoEWH works with women across the state to give them the tools to make healthier choices for themselves and their families. It helps them become aware of resources in their communities. It celebrates women. It acknowledges their challenges.

WV Diabetes Symposium and Workshop: Bridging the Gap with Education

By: Cindy Fitch

Diabetes is a serious, costly and increasingly prevalent disease that imposes a high burden to individuals and to society. There is also an increase incidence of type 2 diabetes mellitus in the U.S. West Virginia has been particularly hard-hit by the diabetes epidemic. WV leads the nation in prevalence of adults with diagnosed diabetes (12.1%) and is third in the nation in adult obesity prevalence, a risk factor for the development of diabetes. Diabetes is a public health crisis and there is a critical need for health-care professionals and community-based educators to provide outreach and service in the rural areas of West Virginia and the surrounding areas of Appalachia.

The **WV Diabetes Symposium and Workshop: Bridging the Gap with Education** is October 20-22, 2010 at the Charleston Embassy Suites. It provides information on cutting-edge advances in diabetes care and prevention from some of the most accomplished scientists in the field at a reasonable cost to participants. The symposium will include presentations that focus on prevention and management in children (Cowan, Jameson, and Jeffrey). There will be presentations on strategies to prevent and manage diabetes through community education and outreach (Troutman, Crespo, and Gregg). Peyrot and Denham will address family and provider support for those with diabetes. Dolin and Garg will review specific medical therapies to manage diabetes. Jackson, Hornsby, and Franz will discuss lifestyle interventions that are known to decrease the risk of developing diabetes or the risk of developing complications of diabetes. **For Information:** <http://dsw.ext.wvu.edu> or Cindy.Fitch@mail.wvu.edu

Physical Therapy for Women's Health Issues

By: Marnie Clemens

Did you know that physical therapy can address a variety of women's health issues? Most people think of a PT working with sports injuries, strokes, or work injuries. Often people aren't aware of the variety of conditions that can be treated non-surgically with physical therapy.

Physical therapists often work with women with pelvic pain, fibromyalgia, incontinence, constipation, osteoporosis, back pain, breast cancer, and during and after pregnancy. An evaluation is performed and treatment designed to address pain and functional mobility in daily activities such as housework, posture, or lifting.

A PT will work with each woman to develop a plan of treatment to address individual needs. This may consist of specific exercises, hands on manual therapy, lifting techniques, posture training, or modalities such as heat or ice. Most outpatient orthopedic PT's routinely work with women with back and neck pain. There are also PT's who specialize in working with other issues found more in women such as pregnancy related pain, pelvic pain, fibromyalgia, osteoporosis, and lymphedema.

To find a physical therapist visit www.apta.org. To locate a women's health PT go to www.womenshealthapta.org

COEWH Community Advisory Network Leadership Team:

Elaine Bowen, Ed.
Outreach Director

Betty Critch, MBA,
Executive Director

Janine Breyel
Program Coordinator

Mary Herald
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Katie Robinson
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Upcoming Events

September

September 22nd-24th
"A Healthy Life is a Life Well Lived"
 Conference
 Canaan Valley Resort
 Davis, WV

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October 16th
WOW Retreat
 8am-5pm
 WV Northern Community College
 New Martinsville, WV

October 20th
Women in Color Luncheon
 11:30am Mountainlair Ballrooms
 (There is a fee)

October 21st-22nd
Diabetes Symposium and Workshop
 Charleston Embassy Suites
 Charleston, WV

October 22nd
WOW Retreat
 8am-5pm
 WV School of Osteopathic Medicine
 Lewisburg, WV

November

November 2nd
General Election Day
 University Recess

November 7th
Day Light Savings Time Ends

November 11th-12th
Perinatal Partnership Conference
 Robert C. Byrd Health Science Center
 Charleston, WV

November 24th-26th
Thanksgiving
 University Recess

Walk for Women...Take a Step against Breast Cancer

By: George Ann Grubb

Throughout October 2010, Mountains of Hope (West Virginia's Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition) and its partners are sponsoring twenty regional **"Walks for Women...Take a Step against Breast Cancer."** The Walks will take place in:

- Camden-on-Gauley
- Clarksburg
- Clay, Elkins
- Glenville
- Grafton
- Hamlin
- Hundred/Burton
- Huntington
- Itmann,
- Lewisburg
- Lindsie
- Man
- Martinsburg
- Princeton,
- Pt. Pleasant
- Triadelphia
- Weirton,
- Wheeling
- Williamson

The purpose of the Walks is to raise awareness about the importance of Breast Cancer screening, to honor breast cancer survivors, and to remember those who have died from the disease. Donations benefit the **West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment Fund** and usually come from individuals and corporate sponsors participating in and/or supporting the Walks.

The Fund, created by the West Virginia State Legislature in 1996, helps pay for diagnostic and limited treatment services for uninsured West Virginia women who may not be able to otherwise afford breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment services. The Legislature allows Mountains of Hope and its volunteers to raise money, through donations, to increase the amount of dollars in the Fund. The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health administers the Fund.

Every dollar raised supplements the Fund and allows more women to access services. Individual and corporate tax deductible contributions are accepted through the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. Last year, the Walks raised over \$100,000 for the Fund.

The Walks for Women range from one to three miles long. There is a rest station at the mid-point of each Walk. For a list of Walk dates and times, or to find out how to participate in a Walk, call the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program's Education Coordinator at (304) 293-2370.

Right from the Start Program

By: Jeannie Clark

The Right From The Start Program (RFTS), through the WV Office of Maternal, Child and Family Health (OMCFH), was birthed in 1989 and has been very successful in ensuring access to health care for low income women and children. This program is a comprehensive statewide initiative for government sponsored pregnant women whose incomes are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and pays for a portion of the woman's prenatal care if they have no insurance to cover their care.

Right From The Start also provides home visitation care coordination services for pregnant women through 60 days postpartum and Medicaid eligible, at-risk infants up to one year of age. A major component of RFTS, home visiting care coordination is provided by registered nurses and licensed social workers to eligible prenatal clients during pregnancy and through the end of the second postpartum month and to infant clients until they reach one year of age. The purpose of home visitation is to assess educational, social, nutritional and medical needs and to facilitate access to appropriate service providers. Coordination components include a personalized in-home assessment to identify barriers to health care, an individually designed care plan to meet client needs, community referrals as necessary, follow-up and monitoring. All pregnant Medicaid and OMCFH (Title V) cardholders are eligible for educational activities designed to improve their health (i.e., childbirth education, smoking cessation counseling, parenting and nutrition). These women and infants have access to transportation to their medical appointments through the Access to Rural Transportation (ART) Project under RFTS.

Eight Regional Care Coordinators (RCC) registered nurses, located in the eight WV Public Health regions, coordinate, monitor, and facilitate program components and services. They provide education and support to obstetricians, facilitate educational seminars for the Designated Care Coordinators (DCCs) whom they supervise, and promote the purpose of RFTS to the community.

RFTS services are provided in collaboration with the Primary Medical Provider and client information is shared with the provider. A Prenatal Risk Screening Instrument (PRSI) is completed to assess the pregnant client's service needs. A DCC is assigned to the client who makes a home visit and, based on the assessment; the individualized service care plan is developed. Infants are referred into the RFTS Project via the WV Birth Scoring system, the DCC makes a home visit and an individualized service care plan is developed with the family according to identified needs. The DCC locates resources, makes referrals, and arranges for treatment and support services relative to the client's service care plan. The DCC ensures appropriate quality, quantity and effectiveness of services and confers with the client as well as the medical provider to review the service plan periodically to determine continuity of needs and services received.

More information about the RFTS Program is available at www.wvdhhr.org/rfts or by calling 1-800-642-8522.

For a list of regional Right from the Start offices please visit:

<http://www.wvdhhr.org/rfts/rcclist.pdf>

In the Media

Michelle Obama's initiative on child obesity prevention has received a lot of media attention. Girls have higher prevalence of overweight and physical inactivity. As health advocates, stay up-to-date on the latest resources for promoting good health with children. Check out the new website and apps: www.NorishInteractive.com and www.appsforhealthykids.com

The Cause and Cure for Stress at Work

By: Aila Accad

West Virginia University Robert C. Byrd Health Sciences is proud to be one of 20 nationally designated National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health. This designation is awarded by the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Women's Health. West Virginia University (WVU) joins institutions such as Harvard University, University of California, Los Angeles; Boston University Medical Center; and the University of Illinois at Chicago, among others. More than prestige, the designation reflects the quality and scope of care, research, and education we offer at WVU and gives us an opportunity to build on that foundation and enrich the lives of the women in West Virginia

www.wvhealthywomen.org

www.wowicandoit.com

www.womenshealth.gov

Job stress occurs when you work too much; work in conflict with your values and talents or work under difficult circumstances. It is not news to anyone that stress can make you physically sick.

Not only can work stress make you sick, but once you get sick, your lower energy levels affect the quality and quantity of your work. Eventually, impaired performance can ruin your career.

Whether you work for yourself, own a business or are an employee, stress on the job is a growing problem. With increasing financial constraints, employers are asking more of each worker with fewer resources. You are not only concerned about your stress, but also the stress of the people around you. Other's stress can affect your work and health as well.

Take a moment to write down a few of the things that stress you at work. Look at the items on your list. What do the items all have in common? Do you have control over any of them?

Situations that cause you stress are situations you feel you cannot control – too much to do with too little time or resources, other people not pulling their load, negative or demanding supervisors or coworkers, or fear of job loss for example.

The key to reducing your stress is focusing your time and energy on the things within your control, namely your own thoughts, feelings and choices within the situation.

The Key Principle for Stress Reduction

You have NO control of anything outside yourself.

You have TOTAL control of everything inside yourself.

This does not seem earth-shattering until you look at daily reactions to what stresses you.

You reduce your stress when you put your time and energy into the one area where it will pay off, where you have total control and power to direct your life – in YOU, what you think, feel and choose (your actions). This brings you the confidence and freedom Of Self-Mastery.

Keeping this principle in mind will serve you well as you learn to reduce your stress in any area of your life, including your work life.

© Aila Accad

Aila Accad, RN, MSN is an award-winning speaker, bestselling author and certified life coach, who specializes in quick ways to release stress and empower your life. A health innovator and futurist, member of the National Speakers Association, she is a popular keynote speaker and radio and television guest. Her bestselling book "*34 Instant Stress-Busters, Quick tips to de-stress fast with no extra time or money*" is available at www.stressbustersbook.com Sign up for *De-Stress Tips & News* at www.ailaspeaks.com and receive a gift, "*Ten Instant Stress Busters*" e-book.

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The 2010 Growing Healthy Children Health Care Reform Summit

The Summit held on August 30-31st, 2010 brought some of the most insightful experts on health care policy to Charleston, West Virginia. *The Charleston Gazette*, recently reported, West Virginia ahead of curve on health-care reform, experts say. "West Virginia is taking strong steps to get ready for the new federal health-care reform law," Kathleen Stoll, deputy director of the non-profit Families USA, told a conference of West Virginia health-care workers, policy-makers and advocates Monday.

"I go all over the country, and I would rank West Virginia in the top 10 states in terms of thinking ahead and doing the things that need to be done," she said, speaking at the "Growing Healthy Children" conference in Charleston.

"West Virginia has a real head start on many states," Mark Blum, director of America's Agenda: Health Care for All, agreed.

Get the facts about health care reform www.wvahc.org

<http://www.wvgazette.com/News/2010082300917>

GRANTS TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Milan Puskar Health Right, West Virginia University Extension Service, Berkeley County Health Department, and the Clay County Health Department were four organizations selected from thirty-nine applicants to receive the first Communities on the Move (COM) Grants from West Virginia on the Move (WVOM) to promote physical activity in West Virginia.

Milan Puskar Health Rights was awarded \$3,200 for *Physical Activity Cohort*, a program that will promote physical activity to low-income sedentary individuals in partnership with pharmacy graduate students through facilitated exercise groups. Contact Scott Matthews at 304-292-8234 x 120.

WVU Extension Service in partnership with CEOS received at \$4,975 for *Let's Go the Extra Mile*, a program that will promote physical activity to older rural women through supportive walking groups organized and supported across multiple community organizations. Contact Elaine Bowen at 304-293-8584.

COM grants will reach over 1,000 West Virginians statewide. Participants will include low income individuals, rural women, and families. "These projects address a wide range of physical activity opportunities and audiences in both size and scope. We are excited to work with these organizations to help West Virginians become more physically active," says Nancy O'Hara Tompkins, WVOM's COM Chair.

WVOM is a nonprofit organization that promotes a physically active lifestyle for all West Virginians by providing leadership, technical expertise, and collaboration with the goal of reducing the prevalence of chronic disease. Funding for this program was provided by The Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation. For additional information go to www.wvonthemove.net or contact Shannon Holland at 304.345.1235.

Reasons to Smile!

By: Gina Sharps

Over the past few years, research has proven a direct link between oral health and overall health. Taking control of your oral health at every stage of life will save money, prevent chronic diseases, improve school and work success, and help women live a longer life, giving you a reason to smile!

Women have special health care needs and their oral health is no different. The health of your mouth directly affects your overall health. **A Healthy Mouth is part of a Healthy Body.** Poor oral health, including gingivitis (bleeding gums), periodontal disease (which leads to tooth loss), and oral infections such as abscessed teeth can lead to: heart and lung disease, diabetes, poor birth outcomes (pre-mature and low birth-weight babies). If left untreated, poor oral health can increase the risk of developing these potentially life-threatening diseases which are responsible for the deaths of millions of women each year.

Oral Health during the Reproductive Years

Good oral health begins before birth. **P**regnant women are at a higher risk for cavities. They are also at a high risk of developing pregnancy gingivitis. This may lead to gum disease if not caught early. Pregnant women with gum disease may be 7 times more likely to have a baby that is born too early or too small.

Most women are unaware of the status of their gum health. A visit to the dentist for a checkup, as well as taking folic acid, before getting pregnant or early in the pregnancy is strongly recommended. Dental care during pregnancy is safe for both the expectant mother and baby.

Oral Health during the Infant Years

Mothers of new **b**abies should continue to take excellent care of their own mouths because the bacteria that causes cavities is spread from mother to child. New mothers should keep strict daily habits of brushing and flossing to reduce the number of harmful bacteria in their own mouths. This will reduce the chance of spreading harmful bacteria to their children. Chewing gum containing xylitol is another excellent way to reduce bacteria in the mouth both during pregnancy and adulthood.

Dental check-ups should start at one year of age and continue throughout life. Start wiping the gums daily and begin brushing as soon as the first tooth comes in.

Oral Health during Puberty and Adulthood

During **p**uberty and **A**dulthood, it is important to keep teeth and gums clean to prevent gingivitis. This is done by brushing twice a day, flossing daily and deplaquing (removing bacteria) from your tongue. It is also important to eat a healthy diet and monitor the amount of sugar and acid intake in food and drinks. Soda, sports drinks and sugary snacks can take a toll on teeth and potentially led to tooth decay.

Some women also notice gum inflammation and discomfort during their **m**enstrual cycle. Symptoms can include a slight burning feeling, bleeding with minor irritation, gum redness, oral ulcers, and general gum pain and discomfort. These changes can be attributed to hormonal fluctuations and should never be constant. Always have any persistent changes checked by a dentist.

During **p**eri-menopause, **m**enopause and **p**ost-menopause, women may have oral discomfort, dry mouth, burning mouth, altered taste sensations, and possible bone and tooth loss with osteoporosis. It is important to visit your dental professional every 6 months for professional cleanings and to talk about any changes in your mouth



General Election Day- November 2nd

Democracy is only as effective as its citizens. Only an informed and active voting electorate can make sure that important issues are addressed at the national, state and local levels. At 50.7%, females now make up just over one-half of the population. In West Virginia, we represent a slightly larger percentage -- 51%. Yet, only 16.8% of the members of the U.S. Congress in 2010 are women. It is important that we elect candidates who understand issues that are important to us and affect our daily lives. We encourage you to examine candidates' positions and make sure their priorities are in line with yours before casting your vote on November 2, 2010. Organizations, such as the League of Women Voters, offer non-partisan educational information on races and positions that you may find useful.