Hope and Faith of a Cure

For Betsy Hodges, LPN and Clinic Nurse at Lakeland Senior High School, an initial visit at the Lakeland Employees Health Clinic in April 2016 was nothing short of life-changing and her subsequent medical treatment has been life-saving!

“I had the privilege of being seen by Patricia Bayshore, ARNP. It was a regular visit to establish a primary care practitioner, and I had no particular complaints other than some bronchitis,” Betsy shared. Routine lab work was ordered as well as a chest x-ray. That is when Ms. Hodges knew something was wrong. “My first career was as an X-ray tech and I realized from looking at the films that something was not right. Patricia called me the next day to say the results were suspicious of cancer and further testing was required,” Betsy recalled. After additional tests, the diagnosis was confirmed. “I was not a smoker, but I grew up with second-hand smoke.” The week before Memorial Day Betsy learned she had stage 4 metastatic cancer. “A local cancer specialist told me that no one could cure me, and this made me very angry. Negativity was not what I needed,” Betsy chided. During several weeks of waiting for a more defined diagnosis, Betsy had contacted Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) for information and an appointment. “I was treated like I was the only patient they had to talk to that day. My appointment was set, and my insurances were approved in network,” she added.

In early June, Betsy met with her CTCA network in Newnan, GA, which is located south of Atlanta. Her multidisciplinary TEAM included a medical oncologist, naturopath, nutritionist, pastor, nurses, care coordinators, and many others that attend to all aspects of her cancer treatment. Betsy explained, “The naturopath provides supplements to keep the patient strong and advice on medications that could cause interactions or problems. The nutritionist advises what foods to eat, such as organic fruits and vegetables, and those to avoid, such as cured meats.”

Meeting with the CTCA Team every two weeks, Betsy receives a combination of four different chemotherapy drugs. Anti-nausea medication is given before her infusions begin and this has enabled Betsy to return to work without side effects except for a little fatigue. “After the first round of six treatments I had CT scans that showed a reduction in the size of the tumors. I then had a second round of six treatments. Again there was reduction in the size of the tumors. I was then told that my cancer was not spreading or progressing in any way, and I was put on maintenance medication,” Betsy explained.

Betsy has never been told her cancer can be cured, but she believes that she will one day be a cancer survivor. “The treatment at CTCA gives me and other patients hope and faith of a cure. The treatment received is extraordinary and discoveries are being made every day. I cannot say enough about the wonderful people there,” she exclaims. “Even housekeepers are kind and give you hugs and prayers. There is not one ion of negativity in the whole place. You are always greeted with warmth and smiles.” Although Betsy has her CTCA Team in GA, she has continued support at the Employee Health Clinic. “Patricia has maintained contact with me throughout my treatment and calls to make sure I’m fine. I’m very appreciative of her care and concern.”

The Lakeland and Haines City Employee Health Clinics are available for all employees and those retirees who are covered under the School Board Florida Blue health plan. Please call 863-419-3322 to make an appointment.

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Spotlight of the month shines on...
Betsy Hodges
16th Annual Polk County Public Schools
Employee & Retiree Health Fair
Saturday March 11, 2017 7am - Noon
First United Methodist Church
72 Lake Morton Drive
Lakeland, FL 33803

Win great door prizes, enjoy 55+ vendors, and learn great ways to improve your health and well-being. To register, visit www.polk-fl.net (keyword: wellness) or call (863)-648-3057

Do you know your numbers?

Good health depends on many important numbers, such as total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, triglycerides, glucose, blood pressure and others. Get all of these done and more at the 2017 Health Fair. Determine your risk factors for heart disease and diabetes with a simple blood test. An 8-hour fasting is recommended for the most accurate results, but only a 2-hour fast is required.

An appointment is required for blood work.

To schedule your time, please visit www.polk-fl.net (keyword: wellness). For those without computer access, call (863)-648-3057 to make an appointment.

Get Empowered - Life Saving Screenings!

Join the PCPS Wellness Team, fabulous volunteers and generous vendors/health care providers at the 16th Annual Employee & Retiree Health Fair. All participants will receive great incentives and screenings as follows:

- **Blood Work** -- Florida Blue, one of two 2017 Health Fair title sponsors, will conduct a quick finger stick screening to reveal your glucose, triglycerides, total cholesterol, HDL, LDL, and TC/HDL ratio. Combine these with your weight, height, and blood pressure and you have the foundation for your personalized health report card. Health coaches will be available on-site to review your results. **Appointments are required; visit www.polk-fl.net (keyword: wellness) to register or call (863)-648-3057 if you are without computer access.**

- **Medication Management** -- Do you have questions regarding your medications? You are not alone! Visit WellDyne, one of the 2017 Health Fair title sponsors, and get the answers you need to keep you healthy.

- **Skin Cancer Screening** -- Visit Suncoast Skin Solutions for a comprehensive skin exam; **no appointment needed.**

- **Memory Loss** -- The Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association offers free memory screenings at the Health Fair. Each screening takes 15 minutes. **Email thompsons@alzflgulf.org or call (863)-292-9210 to schedule an appointment.**

- **Hearing** -- Loss of hearing happens gradually over time and affects over 34 million Americans. Visit Winter Haven Audiology at the Health Fair to get your ears checked! **No appointment needed.**

- **Vision** -- Visit several vendors to check your eyesight. No appointment necessary.

- **Bone Density** -- Weak bones decrease the ability to do daily activities and can cause pain. Stop by the Lakeland Regional Health/RIS booth to have your bone density measured. **No appointment necessary.**

- **Vein Check** -- Stop by the Vascular Vein booth for an ultrasound screening, which checks vein health. It is quick and painless; **no appointment required.**

- **Foot Check** -- Sensory loss in feet is common among people with diabetes. A simple 3-minute foot check could save a limb. Have yours screened today. **No appointment necessary.**
Health Fair Checklist

- Wear your School Board name badge
- Bring your School Board/Florida Blue insurance card, if applicable.
- Retirees may complete blood work; bring a form of identification.
- All Employees are eligible to attend the Health Fair even if they are not covered under PCSB insurance.
- Check in for lab work at your appointment time -- not before.
- A spouse covered under the PCSB insurance can attend the Health Fair at no cost. A spouse not covered under the PCSB insurance must pay $45 cash (no bills larger than $20) for Florida Blue screenings.
- Make an appointment for spouse's blood work at www.polk-fl.net (keyword: wellness) using spouse's contact information.
- Allow about 30 minutes to complete blood work and personal health assessment.
- Allow 1-2 hours to visit more than 55 health related vendors.
- Attend the Health Fair, meet your friends, win prizes, and learn the best ways to improve your health.

Special Thanks To Our Title, Gold, and Silver Sponsors!

Florida Blue  WellDyne Rx

Better Bladder  BOND CLINIC, P.A.

Women's Care Florida Lakeland OB-GYN  GESSLER CLINIC, PA

Tobacco Free Florida.com  Florida HEALTH Polk County

Saladmaster  Watson Clinic Foundation, Inc.

Wellness Matters  3
Know Your Numbers!

Cholesterol is a soft, fat-like substance found in the blood and in all the body’s cells. When it builds in the inner walls of plaque can narrow the artery walls and reduce blood flow, which can cause blockages that can lead to blood clots, heart attacks or strokes.

Surprisingly, your body actually needs cholesterol to function normally and to stay healthy. However, remember that our bodies are fully capable of making all the cholesterol it needs. It’s what you put into your body (yes, we mean those salty snacks and baked goods), and in some cases your family health history that causes trouble.

It’s also important to note that all cholesterol isn’t created equally. There are two types; good and bad. And understanding the difference and knowing the levels of each in your blood is critical. Too much of one type, or not enough of another can put you at risk!

Types of Cholesterol:

- **LDL Cholesterol**: This is the type that, when too much is present in the bloodstream, can clog your arteries naturally by the body, but is also inherited from your parents or even grandparents. Eating a diet high in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol also increases how much you have.

- **HDL Cholesterol**: High levels of this type of cholesterol removes excess plaque from your arteries.

- **Triglycerides**: This is a form of fat made in the body. If you have an inactive lifestyle, a diet high in carbohydrates, smoke, are obese or drink too much alcohol, it can raise your total cholesterol levels.

High cholesterol has no signs or symptoms, so it’s important to know your numbers. Values are listed on the right.

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The ABC's of Diabetes

Florida Blue and PCPS Wellness Program

The **ABCs of Diabetes** is a voluntary diabetes self-care program. As an active PCPS Health Plan and **ABCs** member, those enrolled will receive diabetes education, support, approved supplies and medications at no cost. The **ABCs** active membership requires on-going participant compliance with program obligations. Here are a few of the benefits **ABCs of Diabetes** participants enjoy:

**Benefits:**
- Free foot exams
- Lipid, HbA1c, kidney function, and blood pressure screenings
- Free glucose monitor

**No Copayments:**
- All diabetes medications
- Generic hypertension medications
- Generic cholesterol medications

**Education:**

Lake Gibson Middle School Media Center, 6901 N Socrum Loop Road, Lakeland, FL; 4:30-6:30 pm
- Fitness & Nutrition • THURSDAY, 2/02/17
- Medical Issues • THURSDAY, 2/9/17
- Meal Planning • THURSDAY, 2/16/17
- Htn & Heart Disease • THURSDAY, 2/23/17

**Total Cholesterol:**
- < 200mg/dL = Desirable level
- 200-239 = Borderline high
- >240 = High

**HDL:**
- <50 mg/dL = Major risk factor for heart disease
- >60 mg/dL = Considered protective

**LDL:**
- <100 mg/dL = Optimal
- 100-129 = Above optimal
- 130-159 = Borderline high
- 160-189 = High