

# Health Traxx

For Teachers by Teachers

A PUBLICATION FOR TEACHERS HEALTH TRUST PARTICIPANTS

Spring 2009



Volume 8, Issue 1

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We are a  
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**HEALTH TRAXX**  
*The Teachers Health Trust*  
*Quarterly News Publication*

*Health Traxx* is published quarterly by the Teachers Health Trust to help participants make life-saving decisions about health care. Although editorial content is based on sound medical information, we ask that you consult a health care professional regarding all medical concerns. We encourage you to keep copies of this news publication for the purpose of building a handy home medical reference guide or to recycle issues to friends and family.

Any opinions expressed by an author/source whose article appears in this publication are solely the opinions of the author/source and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Trust. If you have questions or comments regarding this issue, e-mail the Trust at [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org) or write to:

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**A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO**

The headlines that currently grab your attention relentlessly churn out information about the economy, unemployment, bankruptcies, government bailouts and on and on. The list seems endless and the impact all of this is having on the world's population can be downright depressing. However, having personally lived through many economic cycles during my lifetime, I believe that after every downswing comes a recovery. History has shown this to be true time and time again.

How did we get here and how do we fix the problems we have helped to create? Better minds than mine will have to answer these questions. Since I am a positive thinker, let me highlight what I see as lessons we should learn from the current situation.

- We all need to reassess our spending habits and to live within our means. Uncle Sam is not going to bail us out. There is a wide gap between "wanting" and "needing".
- We all need to impress upon our legislators at the local, state and federal levels that government services, such as education, fire and police protection, social services and other vital programs must be adequately funded. "Fixing" the budgetary problems will not be resolved by slashing government agencies with a chainsaw!
- We all need to take responsibility for maintaining our own health and the health of our family members in order to attain an acceptable quality of life. Inside this edition is information on steps you can take to maintain your health. The Health Trust has a wellness benefit, zero copay for generic drugs, programs for mammograms and prostate screening, free flu shots and the availability of glucose and cholesterol screening. Use these benefits and the many others offered by the Health Trust as a means to improve your physical health and mental outlook at a minimal cost.

The current state of our nation is a result, in large part, of how we collectively live as a capitalist society. A change for the better will likewise also take a collective effort, but that happens in increments of one person at a time. Who will be first?

Sincerely,

Peter Alpert  
Chief Executive Officer  
March, 2009

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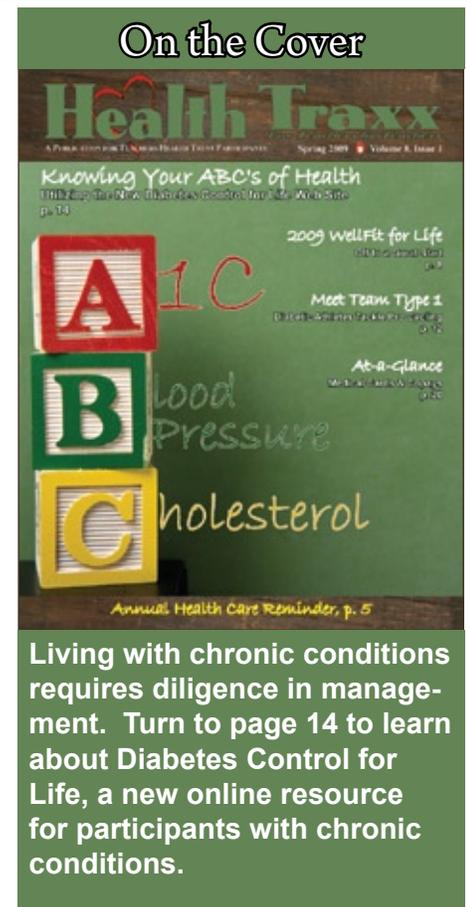
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Living with chronic conditions requires diligence in management. Turn to page 14 to learn about Diabetes Control for Life, a new online resource for participants with chronic conditions.

## Trust Tidbits

### Domestic Partner Annual Verification

The Declaration of Domestic Partnership Form will be mailed out to participants on April 9, 2009. It is not necessary to have the Declaration of Domestic Partnership Form notarized when submitting it for the purpose of annual verification. Forms are due to the Trust no later than 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2009. Failure to submit the signed Declaration of Domestic Partnership Form will result in termination of coverage for your domestic partner and his/her dependents as of May 31, 2009. Please remember that it is your responsibility to verify that all required documents have been received by the Trust prior to the designated deadline dates.

### 2009 WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go Registration

The 2009 WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs are currently underway. Be sure to log on to the official Web site at [www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org) for more information, including instructions, guidelines and event dates. Remember that as of the mailing of this issue of *Health Traxx*, there is still time to register for the WellFit for Life program. The deadline to sign up for the WellFit for Life program is March 21, 2009, so log on today to register and start tracking your mileage. Isn't it time you made fitness fit, too?

## For Your Benefit

If you are adopting and/or maintaining a healthy lifestyle in 2009, your plan has some benefits you should be aware of.

### Health Improvement Benefit

Available to licensed employees covered under the DIAMOND and PLATINUM Plans. The Plans will pay up to \$50 per calendar year for health improvement programs and activities such as health club memberships, personal training, tobacco prevention counseling and education and weight management support groups.

For more information and to download the benefit forms, visit [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org).

# 2009 Health Care Reminder

It's a new year, which means it's time for a new you! And what better time than now to take advantage of one of the Teachers Health Trust's Platinum and Diamond Plan benefits by scheduling your annual wellness appointments today. Remember, the Preventive/Routine Care Benefit has increased to \$600 per calendar year (office visit copays may apply). Take advantage of this benefit available to help prevent disease and illness. The following services are covered under the Preventive/Routine Care Benefit maximum when no diagnosis is present:

- Annual Physical
- Gynecological Exams
- Pap Smears
- Mammograms
- PSAs and DRE
- Comprehensive Lab Work
- Chest X-Rays
- Flu & Pneumonia Vaccinations

And don't forget to sign up to participate in WellFit for Life, another program that is free to you as a Trust participant\*. This program helps you to track your exercise as you trim down and shape up. Be sure to visit [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org) for more information.

\* Consult with your physician before beginning this or any other exercise regimen.

The Trust's *Lifestyle Decisions*<sup>®</sup> program would like to remind participants with chronic conditions to take advantage of the Preventive/Routine Care Benefit for all your annual checkup needs. Remember, each year you should have the following tests and/or exams performed to ensure your best possible health:

## Diabetic Patients

- Annual Physical
- Lab Work
- Foot Exam
- Blood Pressure Check
- Retinal Exam
- Dental Exam

## Cardiac Patients

- Annual Physical
- Lab Work
- Foot Exam
- Blood Pressure Check
- EKG/ECG or Stress Test
- Dental Exam



For more information regarding the Preventive/Routine Care benefit, contact the Trust's Service Team at 702-794-0272 or via e-mail at [serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:serviceteam@teachershealthtrust.org).

For more information regarding the *Lifestyle Decisions*<sup>®</sup> program, please visit the Trust's Web site at [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org).

Additionally, visit the new *Lifestyle Decisions*<sup>®</sup> Diabetes Control for Life online resource for diabetic participants at <http://thtlifestyledecisions.diabetescontrolforlife.com>. Turn to page 14 of this issue for a review of this new resource brought to you by the Teachers Health Trust in conjunction with Abbott Laboratories.

*Prevention Today for Wellness Tomorrow*<sup>™</sup>

# The Healing Effects of Laughter

Is Laughter Truly the Best Cure? The Trust's Raegen Pietrucha Investigates.



We have been hearing it for years: stress is one of the body's greatest enemies. Through the news, medical professionals, and our personal experiences, we learn fairly quickly the price the body pays for stress – whether it be the everyday, situational, or long-term variety. Stress gives us headaches, disturbs our sleep, makes us tense and irritable, drains our energy and focus, cramps our muscles and stomachs, and troubles our hearts.

For most of us, it does not take much to experience stress. Maybe it was a bad day at work. Maybe someone was rude to us at the grocery store or gas station. Maybe the kids were misbehaving. But what if relief from stress was as easy to acquire as the stress itself was? The relief we crave might be found in something so simple, so affordable, so commonplace that we might initially overlook it or dismiss it completely: laughter.

As children, we laugh an average of 80 to 100 times per day. As adults, though, we are lucky to squeeze in five or six giggles. The 6,000+ "laugh clubs" popping up in various places across the globe, however, are actively seeking to change that in order to improve health – body and mind. Founded in 1995 by Dr. Madan Kataria of Mumbai, India, laughter yoga clubs incorporate the breathing techniques of yoga as well as specific exercises that induce laughter

independent of traditional causes (such as jokes).

Why is laughter so highly valued by some that they have chosen to make it part of a physical discipline? Probably because so many healthy impacts can be attributed to laughing. Laughter increases ventilation in the body, supplying more oxygen to our bloodstreams and giving us more energy (and, at times, even providing relief from respiratory conditions). It massages the vital organs and causes the heart rate to increase, which allows for better circulation. It lowers blood pressure and reduces muscle tension. It stimulates T cell counts and lymphocyte blastogenesis, which strengthens the immune system and helps us heal ourselves more swiftly and efficiently. It moves lymph fluids around, which removes waste products. It even slows the aging process by reducing the rate of cellular decay.

The benefits of laughter are not strictly limited to physical health, though. Laughter increases catecholamines (which boost mental functions) and stimulates creativity, memory, and mental alertness. It reduces heightened, stress-induced cortisol levels in the body and promotes relaxation. It increases the body's tolerance for pain but also helps reduce pain by increasing endorphins, which promote a sense of well-being. Laughter gives us an emotional high and allows us to enjoy life more. It relieves boredom and even some symptoms of depression. It helps us overcome fears, keeps life's struggles in perspective, makes us more attractive socially, and helps us bond with others.

Several medical studies have examined the link between patients' laughter and health. A study conducted by UCLA's Jonsson Cancer Center and Neuropsychiatric

Institute & Hospital found that its patients endured painful procedures with higher tolerances and for longer durations of time if they were watching humorous television or film at the same time. One of the most remarkable cases demonstrating laughter's healing power is that of Norman Cousins, who found relief from pain caused by a particularly aggressive form of arthritis in laughter borne from Marx Brothers films. Along with megadoses of vitamin C and a generally optimistic outlook on life, he went on to chronicle his triumph in *Anatomy of an Illness*.

But having an optimistic attitude may yield even more benefits than a small chuckle supplies when one gets sick. A study on World War II veterans found that those who lived longer and had fewer health problems were the same veterans who maintained a positive attitude after the war. Optimistic subjects of a Dutch study suffered from cardiovascular mortality less than their pessimistic counterparts. A University of Wisconsin study found that the activation of the right prefrontal cortex of the brain, typically associated with negative emotions, weakened



subjects' immune response to a flu vaccine and was a predictor of a weaker immune system six months later; while a University of California, San Francisco study found that optimistic attitudes reduced the risk of AIDS-related mortality. Feeling satisfied with life and viewing aging in a positive light both had the power to extend life spans, according to a University of Turku study published in the November 2000 issue of the *American Journal of Epidemiology* and the Mayo Clinic Proceedings in the August 2002 issue of the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, respectively.

The benefits of laughter are not strictly limited to physical health, though. Laughter increases catecholamines (which boost mental functions) and stimulates creativity, memory and mental alertness.

While most findings suggest that psychology can affect biology both positively and negatively, one study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine concluded that, when it comes to cancer, while doctors would still generally promote psychotherapy for the emotional benefits it provides to its patients, mental attitude does not affect the odds of survival. University of Wisconsin's Dr. Richard J. Davidson agrees, stating that mental attitude is only "one factor among a whole host of factors" causing or curing illness in general "and very likely... is not the most important one." Still, though it is unclear exactly **how** optimism might work to promote health in general, that optimism plays some sort of role in wellness – even if only mental wellness – seems obvious when reviewing the majority of research.

The power of laughter and a positive attitude is even harder to deny when a real-life example presents itself, as it recently did among the Trust family. Anita from the Imaging Department was kind enough to share the story of her sister Darlene's mirth while battling

kidney cancer. Chemotherapy was recommended as Darlene's course of treatment, and, like most patients, she suffered from the debilitating nausea and fatigue associated with it. However, during one specific visit, Anita recalled the family reminiscing over a particularly funny memory that got the whole room, including Darlene, laughing deeply from their bellies. A half hour later, Darlene told Anita that her nausea and fatigue were gone. "A lot of people don't realize what a difference [laughter] really makes until [they] see it happen. I mean... it happened right before my eyes... [S]he was so, so sick... A half hour

after all this laughter started, it was like she hadn't been sick at all. I mean, it was just that big a change."

Darlene received four or five funny cards from her family each week, which she kept

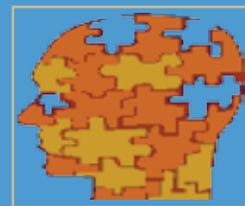
and read several times to lift her spirits during chemotherapy. She remained the optimistic person she had always been even after discovering that her cancer had spread to her liver and had become terminal. Shortly after her daughter brought her back home from the hospital, she said, "Bring me my cards." Darlene spent her remaining time enjoying the humor her family handpicked and tailored especially for her.

Ultimately, in and of itself, laughter is not a cure-all; it cannot change the fact that we are mortal and therefore resigned to a certain fate. But given all the currently known benefits a life full of laughter reaps, why not indulge? Share a joke, play a game, or just enjoy the humor your friends and family provide. As Anita's story illustrates, laughter definitely makes life a much richer, more enjoyable, and more memorable adventure.

- In memory of Darlene Harmon.

Raegen Pietrucha,  
Communications Specialist  
Teachers Health Trust

## MENTAL MUSCLE EXPRESS



Boost your brain power by solving these puzzles. See if you can uncover the meaning in these words, letters, symbols and positions. Each puzzle represents a common word, phrase, expression, person or place.

The example below is "Checkup."

### EXAMPLE

K  
C  
E  
H  
C

(1)

**Key**                      **E**  
N  
S

(2)

**Who**  
**Who**  
**First**

(3)

**NOON**

(4)

**Dray**

(5)

iiiiiiiiiiiiititit

See answers on page 9.

Teachers Health Trust presents

# WellFit for Life / Best Weigh to Go

## The Programs

WellFit for Life is a 10-week cardiovascular program that encourages CCSD-licensed employees to participate in fitness activities of their choice as they strive to adopt or maintain a healthy lifestyle. The best part is that there are valuable gifts, awards and incentives to help motivate participants to give it their all.

The Best Weigh to Go is a component of the WellFit for Life program that encourages participants to add a little friendly competition to their daily workouts by forming teams and motivating one another to lose weight. Team weight totals are recorded at the beginning and end of the program. The teams that lose the highest percentage of weight are eligible to win prizes.

## Off to a Great Start

February 21 marked the kick-off of the Trust's 2009 WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs. This year's kick-off took place at Chaparral High School, where, once again, our participants came ready to get down to business.

The doors opened at 9:00 a.m. to one of the largest crowds that WellFit for Life has seen to-date. Participants and their families eagerly joined the festive atmosphere in order to register their Best Weigh to Go teams, participate in the 5K walk/run and enter their names for raffle prizes.

Of course, there were also plenty of participants who took the opportunity to meet with the sponsors of this year's programs, who came prepared to give each participant plenty to see and do. This year's sponsored activities included fitness testing, body measurements, various health screenings and product samples, just to name a few.

The Teachers Health Trust would like to thank Chaparral High School, the sponsors, our participants and their families for helping to get the 2009 WellFit for Life off to such a great start. The fun has just begun, though, as we continue to make fitness fit. Good luck to all of you during the programs.

## Still Time to Register

Is this the first you are hearing of the WellFit for Life program? Has that New Year's resolution to make fitness fit fallen by the wayside? Did you just not feel like getting up early on a Saturday to head to Chaparral? Whatever the reason for not joining us at the kick-off, we still want you to participate.

Registration for the 2009 WellFit for Life program is open until March 21, 2009. Log on to [www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org) to sign up, log on and start logging your miles. It's never too late to make fitness fit!



The Trust is proud to have Gold's Gym as a 2009 WellFit for Life sponsor. Gold's Gym is hosting free classes for all participants each Saturday during the programs. In addition, the overall Best Weigh to Go grand-prize-winning team members will be awarded free one-year memberships. Children under 13 are not eligible for gym membership; a maximum of five memberships will be awarded. Visit [www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.wellfit.teachershealthtrust.org) for class dates, times and locations.

# WellFit: Lifers' Track

## A Closer Look at Maintaining a Healthy Lifestyle After WellFit Ends.

Erik E. Ekker



Ever wonder how your colleagues fare after the close of the 10-week WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs? So have we, which is why we decided to find out in a new section dubbed The Lifers' Track.

Starting with this issue, we will profile one individual through the 2009 WellFit for Life and Best Weigh to Go programs, tracking and reporting on his/her progress throughout. Once the programs have ended, though, we will continue to track him/her in each issue leading up to the 2010 WellFit for Life. First up is Erik Ekker from Bob Miller Middle School.

Erik has taught Foreign Language at Bob Miller Middle School since 2000. Since joining the education community of Clark County, he says his health and fitness has been quite a rollercoaster. He is hoping to use this year's WellFit for Life program as the catalyst to finally make fitness fit into everyday life from here on out. I asked Erik what makes this year different for him, to which he replied, "[I am] changing now due to the fact that I am hitting 40, and I need to stay on

top of things so that I can look and feel better at 40 than I have at any other age."

Erik knows that if this is to be the year that he makes fitness a permanent and consistent part of his life, it will require him to make a greater commitment than he has in the past. "I have to make a whole life change. There can be no more temporary fixes. I must choose the correct habits that I can maintain for life."

So what are the obstacles he knows he must face head-on in order to meet his goals? "Dieting has always been my struggle. I love desserts, especially anything with peanut butter. Reese's are a killer for me."

Hopefully, with the support of his family, friends and colleagues (as well as a picture in every issue of *Health Traxx* for the next year), Erik will be able to reach his goals. He is currently working out regularly at Gold's Gym and the Las Vegas Athletic Club, so if you should see him, be sure to let him know you are rooting for him!

We'll check on Erik again in June for the summer issue. In the meantime, good luck, Erik!



**YOU MUST FILE A REPORT ON ALL INJURIES AND/OR ILLNESSES INCURRED AT WORK WITHIN SEVEN DAYS!**

Claims resulting from work-related injuries must be filed through your Workers' Compensation carrier, not the Teachers Health Trust. This includes, but is not limited to, coaching injuries, environmental illnesses, etc.

**If you are injured on the job, the Clark County School District (CCSD) and the State of Nevada require that you submit a written Notice of Injury or Occupational Disease (Form C-1) within seven (7) days of the incident.**

If a timely-filed claim and all permissible appeals (including court reviews) are denied as not being work-related, the Trust will review your claims for payment. The Trust will not consider claims if Workers' Compensation denied them because you failed to file your claims in a timely manner.

Regardless of the severity or type, any injury or illness sustained on the job should be submitted to Workers' Compensation. Notify your administrator immediately and then call the School District's Risk Management office at 702-799-2967.

Date: February 21, 2009  
Best Weigh to Go Kick-Off

1



1. Key West 2. Who's on First 3. High MENTAL MUSCLE ANSWERS  
noon 4. Backyard 5. I ate it.



# Hope Pediatric Center

KIDS KORNER

## After Hours Care Available at Hope Pediatric Center—[www.kidztownmedical.com](http://www.kidztownmedical.com)

After hours pediatrics is now available at Hope Pediatric Center at our Henderson location. After hours provides pediatric medical care on weekday evenings (5:00 pm to 8:00 pm), Saturdays (8:00 am to 12:00 pm) and most holidays.

We provide the following services:

- \*Treatment of most pediatric illnesses, including sore throats, eye and ear infections, lung infections, rashes and high fevers (just to name a few)

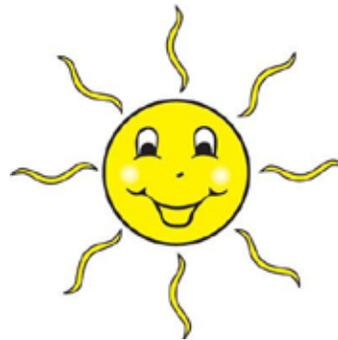
- \*Treatment of minor scrapes and bruises
- \*Laceration repair
- \*Asthma treatment
- \*Pain management
- \* Lab tests—when needed

Because we exclusively care for children and young adults (ages 0—18) our staff and physicians are well trained and very friendly. Our providers and staff have a compassionate and caring bedside manner. Our physicians are board certified.

In addition our facility is designed to put a smile on

your child's face.

We have two convenient locations to serve you. Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 8:00 pm and Saturday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. You can call for an appointment at either location at 702-735-Hope (4673).



## Why After Hours Care?

After hours pediatric care provides urgent care in a nurturing environment. At the heart is the belief that health care providers work with you to best meet the needs of your child.

After hours is not a substitute for the Emergency

Room (ER) in an emergency situations, however most children's illnesses and injuries do not require such extensive facilities.

Typically, Hope Pediatric Centers will see your child in under an hour. The average wait time at the ER is 4

to 6 hours. Your child will be seen by providers that specialize in the care of children and in a safe and child friendly environment.

Finally, you generally only incur an office visit co-pay instead of an emergency room co-pay.

### After Hours Care at Hope Pediatric Centers

2610 W. Horizon Ridge Pkwy. # 200  
Henderson, NV 89052  
702-735-Hope (4673)

6592 N. Decatur Blvd. # 150  
Las Vegas, NV 89131  
702—735-Hope (4673)

### Special points of interest:

- ☺ After Hours care because illness doesn't always happen between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm
- ☺ Come and see us when life's little sniffles and coughs needs attention
- ☺ Compassionate and Caring staff to meet your child's needs

### Seven reasons for After Hours Care vs. ER!

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Avoid long wait  | 1 |
| Avoid hospital cost  | 2 |
| Notes faxed to your Pediatrician for improved follow up Care | 3 |
| Convenient Hours & Locations                                 | 4 |
| Child friendly & safe environment                            | 5 |
| Caring Staff   | 6 |
| Specialize in Children                                       | 7 |



# *Education needs your help!*

Sign up for the CCEA Legislative E-mail Alert today.  
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public education in Nevada and  
send legislators a clear message:

**Make public education  
the #1 priority!**

# Meet Team Type 1



## Diabetic Athletes Tackle Professional Cycling

Take a moment to imagine the following scenario: Your infant son has shown signs of illness such as nausea and weight loss for weeks. After numerous visits to various doctors, one finally determines that your child has Type I diabetes.

As you consider how this will affect your family, the doctor adds that your son will likely be blind by 18, if he lives to see that age. The despair that most parents would feel is what I first thought about when hearing this narrative. Fortunately, Phil Southerland's mother was not the type of parent to accept that all hope of living a normal life was lost for her son. She was filled with the motivation to prove the doctors wrong... and that she certainly did!

Phil Southerland is now 24 years old and has perfectly functional sight. Phil is not only in great health; as a professional cyclist, he is healthier than most Americans. In 2004, Phil partnered with his best friend, fellow cyclist and Type I diabetic, Joe Eldridge, to create Team Type I, a professional team of cyclists who all have Type I diabetes. Together, they set out to show the world that diabetes need not hold people back.

The question one asks is whether the team can be competitive in such a grueling sport or simply come in as an honorable mention? Since their inception, Team Type I has done a lot more than merely show up. As a matter of fact, they have been busy winning races and breaking records.

### NEAD, 2008

I first met Phil in late 2008, when he served as the keynote speaker at a meeting of the Nevada Educational Association for Diabetes (NEAD).



Left to right: Matt Wilson, Phil Southerland and Joe Eldridge of Team Type I hosting a NEAD, Las Vegas Chapter meeting. (2008)

It was during this meeting that Phil told us the story of his mother's rejection of the doctors' predictions that her son faced the prospect of a brief life marred by blindness and sickness. He spoke respectfully of how her strength to fight and his desire to be active triggered a lifelong love and devotion for cycling.

Like most others in the room that day, I was drawn to the young man. This should come as no surprise, since Phil and his team serve as an example of how people can defy the odds and conventional wisdom in regard to diabetes. That alone would command respect, but Phil refuses to stop there. He now uses his newfound fame to help educate others about diabetes, support people with chronic conditions and provide a place for diabetic athletes to shine.

The ways in which Phil manages to do so much for the diabetic community was the focus of discussion when I spoke with him one-on-one a month later. I took the time to learn more

about the man who has become a driving force in the worlds of professional cycling and diabetes awareness.

### In the Beginning

As a boy in Atlanta, Georgia, the primary motivation for Phil's cycling was food. Like most young men, Phil wanted to enjoy the many treats that the people around him did, especially candy bars. In his early years, Phil dedicated himself to cycling simply because it allowed him to have such treats without negatively affecting his blood sugar levels. With time, though, came maturity. As Phil entered his late teens, cycling had become a passion, and he realized it could be much more than a childhood hobby.

As Phil entered his collegiate years, he focused on cycling primarily as an athletic endeavor. He began competing regularly at cycling events hosted by Auburn University, where he was attending school. It was at one of these events that he met best friend and cofounder Joe Eldridge. Joe saw Phil checking his blood sugar and sparked a conversation with him. The two became fast friends, using wagers of food as motivation to keep their blood sugar at healthy levels.

As their friendship grew, so did their engrossment with using their cycling and diabetes management as a vehicle to accomplish something great. It was Phil's realization that they could open the eyes of the world to diabetes as Lance Armstrong did for cancer survivors that triggered the creation of Team Type I. In 2004, Phil called Joe with his idea of forming a professional cycling team composed entirely of diabetic athletes. Joe quickly came up with the name Team Type I, and the two set out to make their dream reality.

## 2006 Race Across America

Two years later Phil and Joe had both a team and sponsors. The team had been training diligently, and it was time to put their skills to the test.

Each year, a grueling cycling competition called the Race Across America (or RAAM) brings forth cyclists from all over the world. This race is a six-day, 3,053-mile trek across the U.S. that stretches from California to New Jersey.

Team Type I decided that the 2006 RAAM would serve as the group's coming-out party to the world of professional cycling. From the start, though, the team ran into issues. Their blood sugar levels were inconsistent, and they were having difficulty keeping the time necessary to place. As always, though, the athletes of Team Type I refused to quit. By the third day of the race, the team had hammered out a process for ensuring their blood sugar levels were consistent and set their sights on improving their time. Despite being hours behind at the start of Day Three, the team maintained focus and made up time across the next few days.

On the sixth day, Team Type I had made up enough time to finish second, only 10 minutes behind the leaders. With that end time, the team knew that they were more than capable, and so did the cycling world.

## 2007 Race Across America

One year later, Team Type I was back and more determined than ever. The lessons they learned in 2006 helped the team find greater motivation and focus during their training. Would a year be enough time, though, for them to improve their performance and overcome the challenges they had faced the previous year?

The answer came quickly, and it was a resounding "yes, they could!" The team set out on the six-day race completely prepared. Utilizing their training regimen and the technology of Abbott Laboratories' FreeStyle Navigator®, Team Type I not only won the 2007 RAAM but broke a world record as well by completing the race in five days, 15 hours and 43 minutes. With the accomplishment of taking First Place in such a difficult race, eight young athletes quelled all doubts about their capability to compete professionally. Along the way, they shattered stereotypes, figuratively kicking down doors everywhere for diabetic athletes. Though they hardly needed it, the affirmation of success had arrived for Team Type I.

"[Even i]f I wasn't riding, I would still be speaking out. Every time I share, I may get to impact a few people. I believe that is too important to quit".

- Phil Southerland, Team Type I

### Speaking Out

Despite the demanding schedule Phil and his team must maintain to stay on top of their sport, he continues to book speaking engagements such as the NEAD meeting. I asked Phil how he and his team manage to serve as such active spokespeople while meeting the training requirements necessary to remain competitive in professional cycling.

Admittedly, it is not easy for Phil, and there are times when the number of speaking engagements he attends are limited to as many as the racing schedule allows. Nonetheless, when I asked why he is willing to commit so much of his already minimal spare time to attending speaking engagements, his answer was simple:

"[Even] if I wasn't riding, I would still be speaking out. Every time I share, I may get to impact a few people. I

believe that is too important to quit." The need to raise diabetes awareness is so important to him that the U.S. is no longer large enough to contain his fervor. Phil has set his sights on the international stage now. Since taking up cycling professionally, he quickly noticed that people in remote areas were having even greater difficulties living with diabetes than those in the U.S. Phil feels that "while diabetes is no longer a death sentence, it requires access to tools, resources and education to properly manage [the illness]." Through speaking engagements, interviews and racing, Phil helps others gain that access.

### Looking to the Future

As to be expected, Team Type I is not leaving well enough alone. Since winning RAAM in 2007, its members have been busy expanding the Team Type I brand, attending speaking engagements, visiting schools, building Team Type II and training for the next race - the Tour de France.

It is clear that Phil Southerland has no intention of slowing and that Team Type I will continue to silence all those who are skeptical about the ability of athletes with diabetes to secure a place in the annals of history and amongst the upper echelons of professional sports.

As it is quite clear that Phil's success can be credited to hard work and attention to health, I asked him what he might say to kids with chronic conditions struggling to realize their dreams. His advice to anyone chasing a dream in spite of the obstacles faced was exactly what you might expect: "Everyone has something to overcome. You can stay in denial about it, or you can embrace [it], overcome [it] and live a good life."

*Philip A. DiGiacomo, Contributor  
Teachers Health Trust*

# Control for Life is Saying Yes, I Can!

The Trust and Abbott Laboratories Team Up to Provide Resources to Participants with Chronic Conditions.

## TAKING CONTROL

The Teachers Health Trust knows that our participants living with chronic conditions face questions and decisions most of us cannot even begin to fathom. Fortunately, our friends at Abbott Laboratories are well-acquainted with many such chronic conditions. That is why the Trust has teamed up with Abbott to bring you the new *Lifestyle Decisions*<sup>®</sup> Diabetes Control for Life Web site.

Diabetes Control for Life is a free online service dedicated to providing tools, resources, information and support. Participants who are already taking part in the Trust's *Lifestyle Decisions*<sup>®</sup> will be familiar with the style and type of content available at the site. The major difference is that, with the help of Abbott, we have grouped, refined and expanded upon all these resources at one easy-to-use Web site.

So what exactly can you do at the Diabetes Control for Life Web site? Registered participants will have access to the following features:

1. *Personalized Control Plan*
2. *Diabetes Article Archives*
3. *Reference Aids and Calculators (Food, Fitness and Monitoring)*
4. *Personalized Recipe Book*
5. *User Community & Support*
6. *Talk to a Dietitian*

The best part of this new resource is how quick and easy it is to register and take advantage of the aforementioned features and more.



## STEP 1: GET STARTED

Begin by logging on to [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org). From the Teachers Health Trust homepage, select the Diabetes Control for Life link found under the Health Trust Programs heading. You will instantly be redirected to the Diabetes Control for Life Web site.

Be sure to bookmark this site so that your new favorite online resource is only a click away!



## STEP 3: EXPLORE

The Diabetes Control for Life Web site has a lot of information and interactive tools available to users. Don't be surprised if you find it difficult to see everything the site offers on your first visit. Start by using the easy tabs located on your homepage to jump straight to the content you are most interested in reviewing. Don't worry: it will not be long before you have a chance to explore all the site has to offer.



## STEP 2: REGISTER

You must register the first time you access the Diabetes Control for Life Web site. To begin registration, click "Join now" in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage.

You will be asked to create a user name, password and personal profile. Once you have completed the registration, you will be redirected to the homepage, where you can begin accessing tools and resources.

## MEAL AND FITNESS PLAN

One of the hardest components of managing chronic conditions as well as simply maintaining a healthy lifestyle is creating an exercise and meal regimen that works for you.

The Meal and Fitness Plan feature of the Diabetes Control for Life online resource will create a customized exercise and meal regimen designed to help you achieve your health and fitness goals.

Registering for the feature requires only a few moments. Enter personal information regarding your physical make-up, activity levels, dietary habits and desired goals. Once this information is entered, the site will instantly and automatically generate a plan for you.

The best part is that you can continue to customize and refine your program as needed.

## TOOLS

While the archive of articles offers an abundance of important information, we all know that a little interactivity goes a long way. For users who crave interactive resources, the Tools section was built with you in mind.

Access the Tools section to find interactive features such as:

- ✓ BMI Calculator
- ✓ Carb Choice Calculator
- ✓ Choose a Blood Sugar Monitor
- ✓ Diabetes Glossary
- ✓ Diabetes Truth or Myth
- ✓ Heart-Healthy Fat IQ Quiz
- ✓ Nutrition Label Guide

## USER COMMUNITY & ASK A DIETITIAN

Select the Community tab to begin interacting with your fellow Diabetes Control for Life users. This section has been designed to allow each user to quickly locate and engage in discussion on topics important to people living with diabetes. The message boards have been divided into easily navigable sections so that you never waste time on content outside of the topics you are researching.

And that's not all! Use the Ask a Dietitian feature of the Community section to discuss those nagging questions concerning diabetic dietary needs. The discussion is all one-on-one via instant messaging or e-mail with a registered dietitian.

## WANT TO SEE MORE? OF COURSE YOU DO!

Log on to [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org) and select the Diabetes Control for Life link to learn how control for life is saying "Yes, I Can!"

# Important Dates to Mark on Your Calendar

## March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
01	02	03	04	05	06	07 - Gold's Gym WellFit Classes: Visit <a href="http://www.wellfit.teachershealth-trust.org">www.wellfit.teachershealth-trust.org</a> for details.
08 - Daylight Savings Time begins.	09	10	11	12	13	14 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
15	16	17 - St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 - Spring begins.	21 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
29	30	31				

## April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			01	02	03	04 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
05	06	07	08	09 - Declaration of Domestic Partnership Form mailed.	10 - Spring Break: Trust Office closed.	11 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
12	13	14	15	16	17	18 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
19	20	21	22	23	24	25 - Gold's Gym WellFit classes
26	27	28	29	30		

## May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					01	02 - 2009 WellFit for Life & Best Weigh to Go Weigh Out: 9 a.m. at Chaparral High School.
03	04	05	06	07 - Declaration of Domestic Partnership Form due.	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 - Memorial Day: Trust Office closed.	26	27	28	29	30
31						

# What is Concierge Care?

And How Does it Fit into the Diamond & Platinum Plans?

Concierge care (also known as boutique medicine) is a term used to describe a relationship with a physician in which the patient pays an annual fee or retainer. In exchange for the retainer, a physician agrees to provide enhanced care, such as a comprehensive annual physical and 24-hour access to the physician via phone. This fee does not usually cover the cost of other services provided by the physician during the year.

The concierge care fee and any services included in the fee are **not covered** by any Teachers Health Trust plan. Any physician who charges a concierge care fee will be terminated from his/her in-network provider status with the Trust, and all covered services he/she provides will be paid at the out-of-network benefit level.

Concierge Care	DIAMOND Plan	PLATINUM Plan
Annual Fee and services included in the annual fee	Not Covered	Not Covered
Other Covered Services not included in the fee, such as office visits	Covered at the out-of-network benefit	Covered at the out-of-network benefit

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

***My annual concierge care fee included a well care physical exam or other covered service. Can I be reimbursed for a portion of my concierge fee under the well care benefit for covered services?***

No. Regardless of whether a typically covered service is provided as part of your concierge care, any fee for services that are included in the concierge care fee will not be considered a covered expense and will not be reimbursed.

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**SATURDAY HOURS**

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**THE TRUST WANTS  
YOU  
TO JOIN THE  
WELLNESS TEAM**

The Teachers Health Trust relies greatly upon the input of its participants in order to achieve excellence in terms of wellness programs and benefits.

One of the primary sources the Trust utilizes for the development of wellness programs and benefits is the Wellness Team Leaders, not to be confused with educators who are coordinators of the Trust's WellFit for Life program in the spring.

The Wellness Team Leaders convenes regularly during the nine-month school year to ensure that the wellness programs and activities of the Trust meet the needs of all Trust participants.

Your participation in this group is vital to the success of the Trust and its programs.

The Trust is currently recruiting new Wellness Team Leaders for the 2008-09 school year. To learn more about the Wellness Team Leaders, to find out if your work site has a delegate, or to volunteer for the Wellness Team Leaders, contact the Wellness Division at (702) 794-0272 or via e-mail at [wellness@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:wellness@teachershealthtrust.org).

**JOIN TODAY**



# At a Glance: Medical Cards & Copays

## A Quick Reference Aid to Your In-Plan Benefits

In January, you received information pertaining to your benefits for 2009. Each year, the Trust seeks to enhance and refine our health care plans in order to maximize the benefits offered to participants.

It is important that all our participants are aware of any changes and additions made to ensure they are well-informed when receiving health care. It is equally important that our participants are informed about the details of their health care benefits, including the copays they may be responsible for during an office visit.

Of course, we at the Trust try to find as many ways as possible to communicate information to our participants, including the *Health Traxx* quarterly publication. In order to help all our

participants stay up-to-date with this important information, the Trust has created the At a Glance Chart found on the following page.

At the top of the At a Glance Chart, you will find an example of each of the two types of Trust medical cards distributed to participants. Additionally, the Trust has agreed to include the card and comparable information for participants of the Retiree Health Trust.\* The cards are displayed in the following order:

1. THT DIAMOND Plan
2. THT PLATINUM Plan
3. Retiree Health Trust Plan

Please take the time to review the information in the column directly below the card that represents your plan, as

that column contains a list of the most common copay types and amounts.

This information can also be found in:

1. THT Summary Plan Document
2. [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org)
3. Annual Open Enrollment Booklet
4. RHT Summary Plan Document\*
5. [www.retireehealthtrust.org](http://www.retireehealthtrust.org)\*

*\*The Retiree Health Trust is not affiliated with the Teachers Health Trust.*

Of course, if you have any additional questions, you can always contact the Trust Service Department directly via phone at 702-794-5859, via fax at 702-794-2093 or via e-mail at [serVICETEAM@teachershealthtrust.org](mailto:serVICETEAM@teachershealthtrust.org).

Dr. Karen Milligan is at the forefront of the cancer fight. Armed with cutting-edge, research-based treatment options she provides care with sincerity and compassion.

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If you or someone you love has cancer, call us today.  
No one fights cancer alone.

# CANCER FOUGHT HERE

Call us today at (702) 822-5111  
or visit us on the web [nevadacancerinstitute.org](http://nevadacancerinstitute.org)

The following are examples of the various Trust medical cards. Look for the plan name at the top right-hand corner of the participant's medical card.



## BASIC COPAYS

In-Plan Benefits	THT DIAMOND Plan	THT PLATINUM Plan	RHT Plan
All Office Visits (including Mental Health)	\$20 per visit	\$30 per visit	\$30 per visit
Urgent Care	\$20 per visit	\$30 per visit	\$30 per visit
Laboratory	\$0 if performed by Quest Diagnostics, \$10 per test if performed by a network physician/provider	\$0 if performed by Quest Diagnostics, \$15 per test if performed by a network physician/provider	\$0 if performed by Quest Diagnostics, \$15 per test if performed by a network physician/provider
Diagnostic & Radiology Procedures	\$10 per test procedure	\$20 per test procedure	\$20 per test procedure
CAT Scans	\$50 per test procedure	\$75 per test procedure	\$75 per test procedure
MRI	\$50 per test procedure	\$75 per test procedure	\$75 per test procedure
PET SCANS	\$200 per test procedure	\$400 per test procedure	\$400 per test procedure
Outpatient Facility	\$150 per surgery	\$200 per surgery	\$200 per surgery
Outpatient Surgeon	\$125 per surgery	\$250 per surgery	\$250 per surgery
Anesthesia	\$100	\$150	\$150
Assistant Surgeon	\$0	\$0	\$0
Hospital Observation	\$100 per day	\$150 per day	\$150 per day
Emergency Room	\$150	\$300	\$300
Ambulance	20% coinsurance	30% coinsurance	20% coinsurance
Routine OB Care (Physician)	\$150 for all routine office visits and delivery	\$300 for all routine office visits and delivery	\$300 for all routine office visits and delivery
Inpatient Routine Newborn Circumcision	\$20	\$30	\$30
Inpatient Hospital/Facility (including Mental Health)	\$150 per day up to \$450 per admission	\$300 per day up to \$900 per admission	\$300 per day up to \$900 per admission
Inpatient Procedures (Surgeon)	\$125 per surgery	\$250 per surgery	\$250 per surgery
Anesthesia	\$100	\$150	\$150
Assistant Surgeon	\$0	\$0	\$0
Inpatient Visits	\$0	\$0	\$0
Allergy Testing	\$1 per test	\$2 per test	\$2 per test
Allergy Antigen	\$1 per dose	\$2 per dose	\$2 per dose
Allergy Injections	\$5 per injection	\$10 per injection	\$10 per injection
Orthotics & Prosthetics (includes foot orthotics)	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 30% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance
Durable Medical Equipment	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 30% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance
Inpatient and Outpatient Hospice Services	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 30% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance
Home Health Care	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 30% coinsurance	Participants are responsible for 20% coinsurance
Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Facilities (This is separate from hospital copays.)	\$150 per day up to \$450 per admission	\$300 per day up to \$900 per admission	\$300 per day up to \$900 per admission
Outpatient Dialysis Facility	\$20 per visit	\$30 per visit	\$30 per visit
Outpatient Dialysis Physician	\$20 per visit	\$30 per visit	\$30 per visit



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Sources: The Trust strives to bring you the most current and accurate information available. Curious about where we get our information? Head over to [www.teachershealthtrust.org](http://www.teachershealthtrust.org) to view the online edition, which contains our source page for all content included in this issue.

# Health Traxx: Spring, 2009

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