Dr. Robert Eagan

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“Such changes will not happen overnight,” said Dr. Eagan. “But, if society as a whole is to improve its health status, it will be because we have educated people and motivated them to take responsibility for their health.”

“I imagine a world where there is no heart disease and cancer, and then ask yourself. How could that happen? The answer is prevention. And prevention is an educational phenomenon,” he said.

Dr. Eagan, a graduate of Albany Medical College, joined Mayo Clinic in 1973 after completing a postdoctoral fellowship in oncology at Dartmouth Medical School. He served 21 years as a consultant in medical oncology at the clinic and also taught at the Mayo Medical School, the last 13 years as a professor of oncology.

Upon arriving at St. Joseph, Dr. Eagan quickly embraced the tenets of marketing to develop new educational outreach to both the general public and to primary care physicians. Inspired as a physician, he is also a committed team player.

“To do what I do, you have to be part of a system. That’s why I chose to discontinue actual clinical practice, and why the hospital chose to employ someone to do the service I provide,” he said. “Strategically, our first concern is early detection, followed by prevention. And one of our main goals is to get as much information as we can into the primary care office.”

“More and more care is going through primary care physicians. We want to educate those physicians in the best way to practice subspecialty medicine. We want to make sure that patients in our area are going to doctors who can handle their needs.”

Most physicians like the education component, said Dr. Eagan, but some balk at the time it takes to talk with patients. One advantage with Healthy Habits is that people can take the booklet home, study it at their leisure, and make optimum use of physicians’ time by asking more informed, follow-up questions.

By educating patients, said Dr. Eagan, physicians can greatly increase their effectiveness in preventing illness. And that bodes well for everyone, especially in a managed care environment.

“In a managed care situation, if a primary care physician can take care of patients and provide education, then his or her role will be more secure,” he said. “In all systems, the numbers of players are going to change. How we build our programs now is going to have a big influence on what happens next.”

…”heart disease and cancer are the biggest health problems we have today.”

Serving a market area of more than 1.5 million people just south of Los Angeles, St. Joseph Hospital sponsors hundreds of community education programs each year and also works closely with its 350 primary care physicians to promote early detection and patient education.

Working under a system of service line marketing, Dr. Eagan uses Healthy Habits in a variety of settings — as a handout at public events, as a guide for doctors and patients, and as a marketing tool in contracting with providers, payors and corporate clients. The center also conducts hundreds of Healthy Habits health risk assessments each year at health fairs and other public events, with follow-up testing as needed.

Most recently, Dr. Eagan has proposed obtaining exclusive rights to The Heart Diet®, then slightly modifying it to become a “cancer diet” offering the same recipes and wellness information to an entirely new target population.

“Diet is important because people can lower their risk for both heart disease and cancer with the same dietary changes. And heart disease and cancer are the biggest health problems we have today. If we can get that message out, we can make a tremendous impact,” he said.

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Partners in Prevention

From the Desk of Susan Levy

President, HMS, Inc.

Getting to the Heart of Prevention

A fter ten years of unmatched success, The Heart Diet keeps getting better — for millions of health-conscious consumers and for thousands of health care providers and strategists.

The Heart Diet shows people how to reduce their risk for heart disease through a better diet, nutrition, exercise and other simple changes in lifestyle. Our 10th anniversary edition also offers a new color scheme, typography and 15 pages of new recipes.

We’ve also made the program more flexible. Beginning this year, we’ve expanded options for customizing The Heart Diet to include printing from 4 to 8 pages in length. We’ve also made it easier for ordering and printing of the 1997 booklet.

For more information, call HMS at 1-800-833-5755. A second service area, call HMS at 1-800-668-9121.

P rovidence General Medical Center, Everett, Wash., which created and launched The first Wellness Challenge in 1992, has released new figures documenting savings of $2 million in employee health care claims costs during the first four years of the program.

Now the PGMG program covering a period between 1992-1995 also showed that:

• among “wellness winners” at PGMG, the average cost of workers’ compensation claims was $67.81 per employee for the period 1992-95, compared with $304.01 per employee for “nice try” participants, and $471.52 per employee for non-participants.

It Takes a Village

When it comes to building healthier communities, few towns are more well-connected — or aptly named — than Alliance, Ohio, a small industrial community of 25,000 just south of Akron. Consider their launch of The Wellness Challenge, for example.

This January, Alliance Community Hospital is starting the city’s first Wellness Challenge program, partnered with two local employers recruited under a licensing agreement with HMS, a leading provider of employee recruitment and wellness management services. The program was completed by the end of November, with start-up scheduled in early January.

Along with the hospital, other program partners are Alliance Machinery Co. and Alliance Tubular Products, both manufacturers of equipment for industry.

You’re Getting Better

It took 1,500 volunteers, 200 medical staff and two booths the size of small houses.

But when all was said and done, Baylor Health Care System scored nearly a flawless outing at the Texas State Fair in Dallas this fall.

A total of 250,000 Heart Diets were handed out during the 24-day fair as part of a huge display sponsored by Baylor’s Senior Health Care Center using the theme “You’re Not Getting Older, You’re Getting Baylor.”

You’re Getting Baylor

People who undergo health risk assessments feel strongly about discussing the results with their own physicians. That’s what the Cancer Center at Southwest Washington Medical Center learned this year in a survey of some of its patients.

So beginning in November, two oncology nurses using laptop computers will administer health risk assessments in the offices of primary care physicians — and process the results on-site so that physician and patient can discuss the information.

The pilot project was organized by Sharon Berry, nurse oncology coordinator at Southwest Medical, who also oversees distribution of 10,000 Healthy Habits booklets each year to physicians on the hospital’s medical staff and at community events.

In the Field

Healthy Good Begins at Home

A new study shows that 60 percent of men are not getting enough exercise to produce even minimal health benefits. In another national survey, half of all adolescents that had not risk factors associated with chronic disease.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families! walks parents and kids how to improve their health and maintain it through simple changes in diet, exercise and the health education where it needs to be — at home, in the hands of families.

The program’s centerpiece — a 24-page booklet — has completely re-looked for 1997 with updated text, an immunization chart and new illustrations showing health-promoting mix of children involved in everyday activities.

We’re also offering three new options for customizing the booklet with special inserts ranging from 4 to 8 or 15 pages. A strategic marketing tool, the program allows medical providers and employers to match any message or detail to the needs of particular patient populations directly to their patient populations.

Through simple changes in lifestyle, good health can make sure that their kids get a healthy start in life. That’s the power message of Healthy Kids, Healthy Families! To find out more about the program, call HMS at 1-800-553-5753.