whole is to improve its health status, it will be because we have educated people and motivated them to take responsibility for their health.

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 11 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. Now we build our programs now in the hope of having a big influence on what happens next.”

HMS SPEAKERS BUREAU

As part of our travels nationwide, Susan Levy and HMS senior consultants are available to meet with and speak with any group in your area, from business and community groups, to corporate clients, providers and insurance partners.

Across the country, HMS presentations have sparked new interest in programs managed by the Partners in Prevention network. Our purpose is to support your work, while spreading the message of prevention and wellness. To schedule a presentation, just give us a call at 1-800-833-5755.

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BEST HEALTH, STARTING NOW

Recent studies show that as many as 80 percent of all cancers can be tied to our daily lifestyle — at home and in the workplace. Healthy Habits carries a powerful message of wellness. Most people can change their risk for cancer.

Healthy Habits, A Family Guide to Help Prevent Cancer, is a comprehensive wellness program that shows people how to take action against cancer. Used by physicians, hospitals and payers across the country, the 32-page guide educates people to move beyond their fear of disease like cancer, with a few exceptions we haven't seen a lot of advances in the last 30 or 40 years,” said Dr. Eagan. “Most of the advances come in the early stages, in better detection, prevention and education. That’s where we can make a difference.”

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.

Still, he is searching for even more ways to market the wellness message.

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.

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.

Imagine a world where there is no heart disease and cancer, and then ask yourself, How could that happen?”

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message of prevention into the community, into the work place, and into the offices of primary care physicians and decision-makers within their own medical systems. What a transforming difference. And what a welcomed change!

In the coming year, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of The Heart Diet — a program that, from the very first, also set a new standard in our industry. When it was launched in 1987, clinicians were just beginning to underscore the link between diet and heart disease, and cholesterol screenings were considered cutting edge. Now, The Heart Diet is the longest-running program of its kind in the nation. Even more, it is flourishing. Our Partners in Prevention network distributed more than 1 million booklets this year, building on its success with years of repeated use.

I think there is an important lesson in all of this. As health educators and strategists, we are always looking to stay one step ahead. And today, we are on the verge of some extremely exciting developments in health marketing, driven both by technology and by organizational shifts within the health care industry.

But, we should never abandon what we have. Our success in building healthy communities is based on perseverance, as well as inspiration. Perhaps you have heard me say this before. But, just about the time we get weary of a promotion, that’s when the public typically begins to get the message. As a program builds, so does the message.

I’m excited about what’s ahead in 2001. With the support of the PIP network, we have built our strongest product lines ever, with more to come. Just imagine looking back ten years from now, to see what we’ve accomplished. But most of all, let’s live in the moment. It’s a challenging, fascinating place to be these days.

From the Desk of Susan Levy President, HMS, Inc.

GETTING TO THE HEART OF PREVENTION

After 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. Its 10th anniversary edition also offers a new section on osteoporosis, 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 special inserts ranging from 4, to 8 to 16 pages in length. Many hospitals are using the space to feature their cardiologists, primary care physicians and their own prevention messages. The possibilities are unlimited.

The current demand for the The Heart Diet is high, with more than 1.5 million booklets distributed during 1996 — and nearly 1 million already on order for 2001. A heart risk profile for women is also available to be paired with the booklet.

If you would like to explore owning exclusive rights to The Heart Diet in your service area, call HMS at 1-800-833-5755. A second printing of the 1997 booklet is planned for next summer.

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 started the city’s first Wellness Challenge program, partnered with two local employers recruited under a sublicensing agreement with HMS, Inc. All three are members of the town’s Alliance for Employee Health, a consortium of the area’s six largest employers. A total of nearly 5,000 workers — about half of them hospital employees — are eligible to participate in the Challenge, said Charlotte Jones, wellness coordinator at Alliance Community. Employee recruitment and health screenings will be 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.

Paired with the campaign is a media campaign with a simple message for women on the importance of mammography. The ads featured a breast cancer patient who later was criticized by her professional peers — and even the county medical society — for taking her message too far. She was advertising a breast regimen that is starting the city’s first Wellness Challenge program, partnered with two local employers recruited under a sublicensing agreement with HMS, Inc. All three are members of the town’s Alliance for Employee Health, a consortium of the area’s six largest employers.

Senior Consultant Joins HMS in Orlando

Pam MacConnell, a managed care specialist with more than 20 years experience in the healthcare industry, has joined HMS, Inc., as senior consultant based in Orlando, Fla. She will support clients in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

MacConnell has worked as a senior officer or consultant with several managed care organizations in the southeastern U.S. In Orlando, she can be reached at 407-668-9121.