

## Program Helps Medical Center Staffers Improve Fitness

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For the second consecutive year, employees of the Delray Medical Center have been teaming up to lose weight in the American Heart Association's Start! Fit-Friendly Program.

In January, 25 teams, each made up of five employees, began a 16-week program in which they kept a food journal diary, were weighed weekly at work and even scanned bar codes on their smart phones while grocery shopping.

Cathleen Dalberg, the center's employee health nurse, said the winning team lost a combined total of 103 pounds, with one member losing 54 pounds.

Grand prize winners in the Fit-Friendly Program earned a two-night stay at the Ritz Carlton in Naples, which was paid for by the Delray Medical Center. Other prizes included \$50 gas cards and \$100 food certificates.

"It's easier to lose the weight when your peers on your team are pushing you to watch what you eat, walk or workout," Dalberg said. "It forces you to step on the scale and make the commitment.

"We also did online assessments, which employees could link to with an app to their phones or at their home or work computers."

Shannon Wills, the center's chief human resources officer, helped motivate employees by explaining how getting in better shape could have an impact on their health insurance.

"Some of the employees have saved money from health benefits from the program. That's money that they're now taking home in their paycheck," Wills said. "Others are waiting to cash in on the savings during open insurance enrollment, which runs from October through next January."

Cheryl Kaiser, Delray Medical Center's wellness administrator, said employees in the Fit-Friendly Program lost weight while at work by walking across the hospital's vast campus in the course of their workday, walking during lunch breaks and using the stairs instead of the elevators.

"The employees would gain healthy points for certain tasks," Kaiser said. "We had regular health screenings and a cholesterol challenge that would help them gain those points."

The Delray Medical Center Fit-Friendly Program continues through Oct. 31.

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/delray-beach/fl-drf-fit-0720-20110720,0,7220296.story>