Dear Fellow BHS Employees,

When our Wellness efforts began, we had high hopes that our program would have a significant positive impact on our employees and their families. It was our expectation that as participation grew, more and more of our colleagues would, with guidance from our Wellness professionals, begin to reap the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.

What I didn’t anticipate was the bearing our program would have on me personally. Three years ago, as a direct result of my routine health screening, I ended up with a diagnosis that changed my life. I learned that I had type II diabetes. At first I was in disbelief. Once I adjusted to the news and better understood my challenges, our Wellness team helped me to make lifestyle changes that have given me the best opportunity to avoid the complications often associated with diabetes. Now, into my fourth year post-diagnosis, I am living a different life. Good nutrition, exercise and a positive outlook have helped me successfully manage my diabetes and improve my overall health.

I thank our Wellness professionals for their commitment to all of our employees and their loved ones, and for the valuable work they do to extend better health and well-being in our community. I encourage all of you to take advantage of this life-changing program.

By David Phelps, President & CEO, Berkshire Health Systems

Moving in the Right Direction

We are pleased to devote this whole issue of Scope to the 10th anniversary of BHS WellnessWorks, but more importantly to highlight and help to support your health and well-being.

Over the last decade, we have seen our collective efforts grow from an initial introduction, that started with individual screening visits and expanded to included programs and challenges with participation from over 2,800 employees. In addition, we continue to improve our workplace environment with healthier food choices, smoke-free properties and departmental conversations and initiatives to further promote a culture of wellness. We are all looking for ways to have more energy, manage stress better, move more and increase our sense of well-being and health so we can enjoy our lives, both at work and at home. And when we feel better, it helps our patients and community too.

The BHS WellnessWorks program and your friends and colleagues are your resources on this journey. We appreciate your engagement, suggestions and your efforts, keep them coming!

Ruth Blodgett, BHS Senior Vice President, Planning, Marketing and Community Health
Ten Years ago, in 2005, Berkshire Health Systems embarked on a new idea of “Wellness at Work”; to engage employees in discussions and to take action regarding their own health.

At the time, not many companies were offering wellness programs, and if they were – they were the Fortune 500 types, not a small community hospital in the foothills of the Berkshires. But with BHS leadership support and a creative, knowledgeable wellness team, it began because it was the right thing to do for employees. Within a few years, it was clear that this wellness at work idea was a good business decision as well, showing reduced or plateaued medical claims with the employees who engaged in wellness.

The BHS Wellness at Work program has achieved national recognition (C. Everett Koop Honorary Mention) three times in the past 10 years; comparing our program with that of companies such as L.L. Bean and Jet Blue. Our wellness program results were published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine in 2009, showcasing cardiovascular risk reduction results over a three year time span.

The awards are terrific, the cost savings on medical insurance claims are significant, but that’s not the reason why BHS offers Wellness. Back to that idea, “It is the right thing to do for our staff.” This is about quality of life, supporting our employees to be healthier, happier and live longer. When the spark goes on, when you get excited about feeling better, moving more, eating less sugar, breathing deeply and relaxing, etc. – that’s what the wellness program is all about; You! Staying healthy takes work, we know this. Getting and staying healthy comes with obstacles, barriers and tough days. It’s really hard work to do on your own; and much easier when you have an ally; a cheerleader, supporter, educator, confidante. We are all in this together; wellness comes in many shapes and sizes and staying healthy your way is what matters.

My Wellness nurse helped me understand the health benefits as a result of my lifestyle changes. We talked about adding exercise to my routine with some simple things, like taking stairs and walking. When you weigh over 200 pounds, running a marathon is not realistic.

-Anonymous
The wellness program has grown significantly over the past 10 years – mostly in part to keep up with the requests of our employees. For example in 2012, we offered two fitness classes; in 2015 we have already offered over 100 wellness activities. When we started, we screened 953 employees; last year we screened 2,820; and 72% of the employees participate in the reduced cost insurance program. Our mission has remained intact: To assist our employees and the community in achieving optimal health and wellbeing. Formally adding our BHS spouses to the insurance requirements was a response to an increase in health insurance claims and because we love your spouse too, and want them to live long and healthy lives.

Part of the BHS Wellness mission includes assisting the community in achieving optimal health and well-being. These opportunities have grown substantially in the recent years as well. The wellness phenomena in America is growing in leaps and bounds – everyone wants to be part of it. The Wellness team’s evidence-based, clinically sound advice, knowledge and opportunities to refer people into BHS is immensely helpful in our community. Currently, BHS Wellness works with fifteen businesses throughout Berkshire County. Wellness has recently begun working closely with Health New England and Blue Cross Blue Shield to offer wellness services for their businesses as well.

Our BHS Outreach team offers strategic programming and health literacy throughout Berkshire County as well. In 2014, the program touched over 8,000 lives, those of our family and friends, neighbors and community leaders. We are a community hospital that is working to keep the community well.

Our favorite mantra is: “Healthy living does not occur at the doctor’s office, it occurs in the choices we make every day.” Mark Pettus, MD

We hope to see you at one of our many wellness events either at BHS or out in the community with your family and friends.

What You Have Done
Your Success!

• Lost pounds
• Crushed cigarettes
• Made screening appointments that saved your life
• Met with EAP to reduce your stress
• Changed your lifestyle, maybe a little, sometimes a lot
• Gained happiness
• Lowered your blood pressure and cholesterol levels
• Started working out, and maybe learned that you like to exercise
• Drank more water, ate less sugar, moved more, slept better
• Started again
• Brought your spouse with you
• Read labels, learned to cook, skipped the junk
• Became mindful of quality of life, started taking care of yourself
• Laughed

Take 30 minutes to exercise and gain positivity, confidence, happiness and wellness! The Wellness program reminds me to take care of myself, eat properly and, overall, just enjoy life! When I am having a stressed out day, I put on my running gear and go! By the time I return, my head is cleared and I feel 100% better. Thanks!

-Laurie Rondeau, BMC Clinical Analyst

Since joining the Wellness Program in 2014, I have joined a fitness center in my area that focuses on strength training, cardio and boxing. I am surprised at the strength and energy I have gained from doing this class 3-4 times a week. I would have never guessed that I would love boxing, what a workout! I am currently signed up for the New England Tough Mudder Competition and also look forward to participating in the BHS 4th of July race!

-Aimee Boesse

Celebrating Ten Years of Wellness continued from page 2
Dave Chapman works as a Hyperbaric Medical Assistant at the Wound Care Center. Dave appreciates that both he and his wife Kate can participate in Wellness events together; they hear the same information and support each other, which has led them both to a healthier lifestyle. Kate shares their story here.

When David and I signed up for the Diabetes Prevention Program, we were both extremely unhealthy. There was no reason to believe we were headed anywhere but even further downhill.

My paternal grandmother and two eldest sisters (identical twins) each died from diabetes. When I became pre-diabetic, I knew I had to stop being my own worst enemy. I couldn't change my genetic predisposition but my behavior was something I had to learn to control while I still had a chance. I felt so completely overwhelmed and full of fear and panic that I couldn't get started. Success seemed impossible. After all, I tried so many times in the past to lose weight and exercise and eat healthy food, but I was never able to maintain my progress.

When David told me that a Diabetes Prevention Program was available through Wellness, I knew I had to sign up with him. Our odds for success would be better if we both were on the same track. We missed the first meeting when David had his second heart attack, followed by a four-way bypass. It strengthened our resolve.

Laura Najimy, RN, led our group. A better teacher, coach, and positive force doesn't exist. She gave life to a program that otherwise would have been just another collection of suggestions and facts on paper. The most effective motivation for me was and still is an awareness of the serious physical harm diabetes can do. Being a nurse, Laura explained the medical issues that plagued and mystified me and, being a skilled teacher, she did it in a way that I, not being in the medical field, could understand. Being a gifted, dynamic coach, she provided the inspiration I never got anywhere else.

As a result, my numbers improved significantly. To date, I've lost 44 pounds. My blood pressure went from 144/98 (and that was while on medication!) to 124/74. Total cholesterol, 206 to 170. Triglycerides, 125 to 79. Fasting glucose, 125 to 93. HbA1c, from 6.4 to 6.0! Better numbers translate into better mobility, increased energy, and a more positive outlook. All of it provides inspiration to keep going. I know I still have work to do. My goal is to get my HbA1c down to 5.5, Davids is now at 5.0! Over the past year, David has lost 90 pounds and his blood pressure decreased to a level where the medication dosages were reduced.

I know I'll continue to have ups and downs. Everyone does because that's life. The difference the Diabetes Prevention Program made is that now I recognize when I have a lapse, it's temporary. It's a stumble and not a freefall. I know how to right myself. And, I know if I need help, I can get it from David and Laura. I know success is within reach. And that makes all the difference in the world.
Eileen Charon is an X-ray Technologist at BMC. In 2014, Eileen participated in the Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) offered through the Wellness Department.

After I broke both of my ankles in 2013 following a syncopal episode, I was very limited in my activities, which led to weight gain and pre-diabetes.

I learned about the DPP and decided to join. With weekly support from the DPP Wellness coach Laura Najimy, RN, and use of the Cardiopulmonary Rehab gym I was able to lose 65 pounds in a year. I learned how important it is to look up nutritional information before I go out to eat. My A1C dropped to 5.0 and I am no longer considered pre-diabetic!

I am so happy to nip this pre-diabetes in the bud. I see every day what the disease can do to people. I work in CT Scanning and I see up close what damage diabetes can do...I will do everything I can to be healthy. The Diabetes Prevention Program is a lifesaver.

Currently, I am exercising 30 minutes on the elliptical and mowing the lawn for 90 minutes using a push mower. I track my activities using My Fitness Pal. With all of my physical activity, my HDL (good cholesterol) has gone up from 63 to 80! I have a goal to lose 65 additional pounds and with the ongoing support of the Wellness program, I hope to achieve my goal.

Pat Sprague is an RN in the Emergency Department at BMC’s Northern Berkshire Campus. Pat previously worked at the former NARH for 34 years. As devastating as the closure was she has a very positive story to tell.

Luckily I was never unemployed; I was hired by BMC immediately after NARH closed and that began my story. First, I had to change my health insurance, and since my husband had also worked at NARH we needed an insurance plan that was reasonably priced. I chose the Network Blue NE Wellness plan, which required me to meet with the staff at the wellness center.

I have been a diabetic for about 20 years and was managed by my PCP on oral medication but my numbers kept rising. When I called to make my initial appointment and spoke with Ann Gero, the Wellness navigator, I knew that this was going to be a big change. I arrived at my first appointment and was greeted with a huge smile and a big welcome. I then met with the Jennifer Nykorchuck, RN, who explained the wellness program, reviewed my numbers and made suggestions for my improvement, one of which was to make an appointment with an endocrinologist.

Dr. Escurza began seeing patients in North Berkshire, so I made an appointment. Since that day the entire team of dietitians, educators, RNs and Wellness nurses have kept me on track. Due to the lifestyle changes I’ve made so far I have lost 30 pounds and decreased my numbers to a healthy range.

I plan on continuing to make healthy food choices, exercise regularly and keep my diabetes under good control. I know that with the help of the caring staff at the wellness center this is possible. So, even though the closing of NARH was awful, for me something great came out of it.
Meet Your Wellness Team

Mark Pettus, MD
Director of Medical Education, Wellness & Population Health

“I love the science of human biology and how it is transforming our understanding of the full capacity for self-regulation and self-care. To be fully present with another and to be able to translate this science to help another are wonderful and for that, I am grateful.”

Maureen Logan Daniels, M.Ed, Director, Wellness & Community Health

“I have a passion for wellness and strive to stay healthy for my family and friends; especially my two boys – my main motivation to stay healthy.”

Timothy Korte, MS, RN, CWPD Wellness Program Manager

“I will be healthier, happier and promote wellness within my team, our organization and community.”

Carol Nixon, M.Ed, CWPM Wellness Program Coordinator

“I enjoy working in the area of prevention where I can have a positive impact on the health and wellness of BHS employees and their families.”

Jennifer Ward, RD, LDN, CPT, Wellness Dietitian

“I love having the opportunity to educate and provide employees with the tools they need to reach their health and fitness goals.”

Michele Murrell, BS, RN, Clinical Wellness Coach

“I’m pleased to have identified potential health risks in employees and to have helped many reduce their risks.”

Tina Brazie, Program Assistant & Data Coordinator

“Participating in the wellness program helps keep me on my toes with my own and my family’s health issues.”

Jennifer Nykorchuck RN, BSN, Clinical Wellness Coach

“Helping others live their best and healthiest lives is my passion. I find my job very rewarding and working as a wellness coach also motivates me to live a healthy life.”

Ann Gero, Wellness Navigator

“I enjoy encouraging and supporting clients in their efforts to improve their health and wellness.”

Mark Kenyon, LMFT, LADC-I, CEAP, Behavioral Health Coach

“It’s important for each of us to find our passion in life, and then to direct time and energy into following that passion. This is a key for us, in order to find better balance between work and personal life, and to keep our energy and engagement levels high in life, at work, at home and at play.”

Doreen Donovan, BS, RN, Wellness Nurse

“Working with the wellness department has been one of the highlights of my career. I have continued to learn and grow as a nurse and a person. I also enjoy delivering the wellness vision to diverse populations throughout Berkshire County.”
Shortly after I began working here 10 years ago, I participated in an introductory volleyball clinic. I enjoyed it so much that I inquired about a league here in Berkshire County, continued with more introductory clinics through Berkshire Volleyball, eventually joining the league. To date I play 2-4 times a week and have coordinated the league on a volunteer basis for 5 seasons. I found a passion in volleyball and have met a lot of great players and improved my skills. Kudos to Wellness for introducing me to this sport!

-Chrissy Zatorski

In January, Wellness offered a week of free trials at the local gyms. I tried several and was able to enroll at a gym and take advantage of the fitness reimbursement, thanks to Wellness. I now exercise 4-5 mornings/week and have started working with a personal trainer.

-Anonymous

Wellness has helped challenge me to move more by competing in the Walk with Me program. I now take a walk for 20 minutes every day at lunch to get those extra steps in.

-Ashley Roy, Lenox Family Health

Obstacles are what you see when you take your eyes off your goal.

-Michele Murrell, RN

I have made a commitment to attend the weekly Weight Watchers’ meetings at BMC, which helps to keep me focused on my weight loss. I always feel supported from the leader, whether I gain or lose. It is an excellent program and the one that finally worked for me.”

-Debbie Janwich, Benefits Specialist

The Wellness Program has helped me on my ‘get fit’ journey… I am committed to being a healthier person by 2016 and appreciate the support I have been given along the way.

-Anonymous

I attended Dr. Mark Pettus’ seminar and I benefited from weight loss and reductions in my migraines. I thought it was the best seminar I have ever attended. I benefited by a whole new outlook and many changes, including diet, exercise and creating a stress free environment for myself. Thank you so much.

-Terry Cormier
Introduction to Tennis
Join Instructor Cheryl Martin
Former Captain of the Bentley University Tennis Team USTA instructor who has taught for 9 years in the community.
Fridays, 6-7 pm • $15

Berkshire West will be offering beginner tennis lessons for those who would like to learn the game and its basics. Classes will include information about the rules of the game, scoring, forehand, backhand, volleys and serving. There is no commitment, you can come as you please and pay at the front desk. It is a great way to pick up a new sport for the summer and have some fun!
Pre-register weekly by contacting Cheryl Martin: (413) 822-8957 or shiralyn10@gmail.com.
Tennis rackets available. Let Cheryl know when you register. Par-Q required.

Kayak Clinics
Kayak the Beautiful Lakes of the Berkshires

Enjoy a relaxing 1½ hour paddle on the water and perfect your skills while having FUN! Join Hilary Bashara, BSN, Red Cross Certified Canoeing & Kayaking Instructor. Novice and experienced paddlers are welcome. Limited to 12 participants. Cost: $10. If you have your own kayak or are borrowing one you will also need to bring paddle & lifejacket.

Kayak rentals available for $35: call Hilary at 413-442-2789.

Monday, 7/13 5:30-7:00 pm  Richmond Pond (Meet at Boat Ramp)
Sunday, 7/26 1:00-2:30 pm  Stockbridge Bowl (Meet at Boat Launch)
Thursday, 8/6 5:30-7:00 pm  Cheshire Lake (Meet Across from Basswater Grill)
Tuesday, 8/18 5:30-7:00 pm  Stockbridge Bowl (Meet at Boat Launch)

Creating a Culture of Wellness
Taking Employee Health to the Next Level...
What can we do to make our workplace healthier? Share your ideas and ways that we can support our co-workers in achieving their wellness goals.

Jennifer Ward, RD, LDN, CPT, Wellness Registered Dietitian

Monday, 7/20 12:15 pm  Hillcrest Campus of BMC, Library
Tuesday, 7/21 Noon & 1:00 pm  Clocktower, 5th Floor Conference Room
Friday, 7/24 Noon  Fairview, 4th Floor Conference Room
Monday, 7/27 Noon  Central Block, Small Conference Room
Tuesday, 7/28 11:30 am & 12:15 pm  BMC Main Campus, PDR “C”

Be one of the first 15 people to pre-register and attend to receive a $5 lunch ticket and 10 Wellness Points! Qualifies as a Wellness Education for 2016 Wellness Insurance Premium Discount.

Indoor Cycling
6-week series begins July 7th

Indoor cycling is a cardio (aerobic) workout set to music and led by a certified instructor. Most classes run from 45-60 minutes. This 6 week program is great for people who want a fun, motivating workout that they can control at their own pace. It’s also low-impact, making it suitable for people who have joint problems.

Cutting Edge Fitness & Martial Arts Center
Summer Street, Adams, MA
Tuesdays & Thursdays • 5:30-6:30 pm
Bring a water bottle. Bike shorts recommended. Par-Q required.

Keep it Moving! More Wellness Programs
Visit the WellnessWorks page of the employee portal for more information and to register for any of our programs. https://www.bhswellnessworks.org