

Connecticut Department of Public Health Worksite Wellness Program Newsletter ~ May 2005

Commissioner's Corner

The interest that you have shown in the **ConnectiFIT** program has been very encouraging. Many of you took the time to respond to the survey and those responses have given us some good ideas as to the kinds of programs that you might find helpful and interesting.

This newsletter has been designed to share information that you can use to im-

prove your health and keep you fit. It will update you on program offerings and provide helpful hints to assist you in achieving your goals. Whether you are looking for weight loss, stress management, improved eating habits or are trying to lower blood pressure or cholesterol, we hope to provide you with support, encouragement and practical ways to help you succeed.

You are important – to us and to your friends and families. Anything that we can do to help improve your quality of life is a priority. I urge you to avail yourself of all that **ConnectiFIT** has to offer.

J. Robert Galvin, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner



Commissioner Galvin introduces ConnectiFIT

Did You Know...

May is National High Blood Pressure Education Month

- Nearly one in three U.S. adults has high blood pressure.
- Thirty percent of people with high blood pressure don't know they have it.
- The cause of 90–95 percent of the cases of high blood pressure isn't known; however, high blood pressure is easily detected and usually controllable.

For more information on High Blood Pressure, go to

www.americanheart.org



Kickoff Success!

Thank you to all who took part in the ConnectiFIT kickoff on March 23. The event was a great success, with over 300 employees stopping by to explore what ConnectiFIT has to offer. Employees were able to collect information on physical activity, healthy eating, CPR and safety, stress reduction and yoga, as well as hear presentations on physical activity, nutrition, and beginning yoga.

Dr. Pouran Faghri from UConn, Principal Investigator of the ConnectiFIT Program, kicked off the morning with an introduction to the ConnectiFIT program and the ConnectiFIT Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee consists of a group of

DPH employees who guide the development of ConnectiFIT programs. She then turned the program over to Warren Wollschlager, who introduced Commissioner Galvin for some words of welcome. He was followed by Mark Fenton, champion racewalker and star of PBS's "America's Walking", who gave a lively presentation about incorporating physical activity into our daily routine. For more information about Mark, see <http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/series/host.html>

We would also like to thank everyone who took the time to fill out and return their Needs Assessment Survey. Based on your suggestions



Mark Fenton gets the crowd going at the ConnectiFIT Kickoff

and feedback, we are planning the next stages of programming for ConnectiFIT.

For more information about upcoming programs or the ConnectiFIT Advisory Committee, go to www.ConnectiFIT.uconn.edu

Needs Assessment

During our ConnectiFIT Kickoff on March 23rd and later through email you received a needs assessment survey. The purpose of this needs assessment was to collect general information on the characteristics of DPH employees and to find out what type of programs interest you. You were also asked to answer four sets of questions regarding the stage of your behavior toward physical activity habits, eating, stress management, and smoking. These questions were based on the Transtheoretical Model of Behavior Change which was developed by Dr. James Prochaska and his colleagues of the URI Cancer Prevention Research Center. This model has been used extensively to promote healthy behaviors and help people to quit smoking, improve their diet, or manage their weight. Based on this model people change their behavior through different stages and thus



The University of Connecticut and DPH team at the ConnectiFIT Kickoff

the strategy to change the behavior is not always “one size fits all”.

It must be tailored based on the stages that people are in recognizing the need to change an unhealthy behavior. Based on the Transtheoretical Model five stages of change have been recognized. These are:

- 1- Precontemplation:** In this stage an individual has no plan to change the unhealthy behavior in the foreseeable future. These people are either unaware of the problem or do not prioritize its importance to do something about it.
- 2- Contemplation:** In this stage an individual understands that there is a problem; however, they have not decided whether he or she wants to do something about it. Person is in the process of cost-benefit analysis. Does the cost of the change outweigh the benefit or vice versa?
- 3- Preparation** In this stage an individual has recognized the need to change, has decided to take action, and is looking to

choose a plan of action.

- 4- Action** In this stage an individual has already started to do something about the problem .
- 5- Maintenance** In this stage the person has been maintaining the plan of action for behavior change and is concentrating on preventing the possible relapses.

The needs assessment questions will help us to understand at what stage you are related to an unhealthy behavior; this information will guide us in developing programs to help you change that behavior.

We are presently in the process of analyzing the need assessment. In general for physical activity, eating habits and managing stress, between 30-35% of respondents are in pre- contemplation. Between 25-35% are actively engaging in healthy behavior (action) exercising regularly, watching their eating and managing their stress. About 35-45% of respondents have been engaging in these activities for more than six months (maintenance). The number of smokers were very small in our respondents only 8% of which half of the respondents plan to quit smoking.

We are planning to use these data and offer programs that are stage appropriate—by helping individuals recognize the obstacles in changing the behavior, the pros and cons of overcoming those obstacles, and how to reach their goal of a healthy lifestyle.



Coming Soon: ConnectiFIT Goes to the Grand Canyon... Watch your email for more info!

ConnectiFIT Healthy Living Seminars	
June 16, 2005	470 Conference Room A/B, 12:00 -1:00 PM
July 26, 2005	470 Conference Room C, 12:00-1:00 PM
August 25, 2005	470 Conference Room C, 12:00-1:00 PM



Keeping Connecticut Healthy

For More Information About ConnectiFIT and its Programs, go to www.ConnectiFIT.uconn.edu or email ConnectiFIT@po.state.ct.us