



Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital Completes Successful LoneStar Team Esteem Wellness Challenge

On July 9th and 10th Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital, in the pineywoods of east Texas challenged its employees to take the 63-day LoneStar Team Esteem Wellness Challenge. Approximately 20 percent of the hospital's employees shed a total of about 960 pounds, with an average BMI (Body Mass Index) reduction of 2.8 percent. Eight participants moved from the extremely obese category (BMI more than 35) to the obese category (BMI between 30 and 35) said Kinnie Parker, MPH, CHES, Program Coordinator. Although the original challenge has officially ended, Parker says it has contributed to the creation of a new culture of wellness, and that they intend to keep up the momentum. "LoneStar prepared them (the participants) for the future and gave them tools that they can use the rest of their lives. Even though our first 63-Day Challenge is over, this is just the beginning of the journey for us."

Tim Hayward, Administrator at Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital, says the LoneStar program is important to the hospital because it "promotes what we're all about—taking a proactive approach to health and wellness. It's more than just losing weight or exercising, it's making a permanent change in lifestyle."

"Promoting the health and well-being of all employees and their dependents is an important contribution to a healthy and safe workplace," says Parker. "Raising awareness about the importance of good nutrition and adequate physical activity should be a goal for all of us. It is exciting to see the employees of Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital take on this challenge and see the results of their hard work. We want LoneStar to be a lifetime thing."

Parker says there has been a noticeable change in attitude about health and wellness. "At the request of employees, healthier meal choices are now more available in the cafeteria, employees are talking about making better choices, they are walking more on breaks, and at meetings where desserts are served, our dietary department reports that, "much less cake is eaten." She adds that one of the hospital's volunteers reported that she no longer brings cookies and treats to the Surgery Department, because the department stopped eating them and asked for healthier snacks.



“Anyone can do this, you just have to start one day at a time,” says Roger Rice, winning individual in the hospital’s 63-Day Team Esteem Challenge. “In nursing you depend on a team, and we depended on each other for this (the LoneStar program). A lot of team effort was involved and I couldn’t have done it without them.”

Hayward says the hospital first initiated the LoneStar Wellness Initiative as a way to promote what the hospital is about—taking a proactive approach to health and wellness. “When Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital introduced the LoneStar strategy to our employees, it was intended to help them change their mind-set to one in which they faced and tackled their health and wellness issues and concerns. Not only did LoneStar help us motivate employees to improve their health and well being, but it also helped us lay the groundwork for a new culture of health and wellness. Now, we’re seeing how this not only helps us, as a hospital, and our employees, but takes us to the point where our community is impacted as well.”