



## Nocona General Hospital / LoneStar Employee Wellness Initiative January 16 – May 1, 2006

With some intense competition between the top teams and remarkable individual performances, the Nocona General Hospital / LoneStar Employee Wellness Challenge concluded on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.

“Well over 50 percent of our full time employees participated in this 15-week challenge and every team either maintained or improved their BMI average score,” says Corrie Kirkendall, RN, and Wellness Center Director for Nocona General Hospital. The winning team reduced its average BMI by 3.3 points to win the \$1,500 cash prize. The runner-up team followed closely with an average loss of 3.24 points.

Kirkendall points out that there were some truly remarkable individual performances, with one person improving her BMI by 6.6 points. Several participants moved from the Obese to Overweight or from Overweight to Healthy BMI categories. “In a very real sense, everyone at Nocona General is a winner. As an organization, we have a heightened awareness of the costs and consequences of poor nutritional choices and inactivity. More importantly, we have demonstrated that each of us has the ability to take charge of our own health and wellness.”

In addition to individual successes, the challenge provided several interesting and unexpected outcomes.

Kirkendall says the teams were determined and creative not only in support of their members, but also in their efforts to “psych out” or even playfully sabotage their competitors (leaving a box of donuts at the nursing station for the night shift). All of this resulted in what LoneStar calls Team Esteem and what employers see as improved employee morale.

“An unintended outcome is that our soda and candy vending machines sales are down which is great except that the profits from the machine helps fund our EMT program,” says Kirkendall. She adds that everyone agrees it’s a small price to pay—one that will be easily offset by the anticipated reduction in employee health care costs and absenteeism.

As advertised, Kirkendall says the challenge was inexpensive, easy to implement and required only minimal administration by herself and staff. “We received excellent support from the people at LoneStart and I am very pleased with the outcome of this initiative.” As a result of the LoneStart Challenge, Kirkendall says Nocona General Hospital is experiencing a new culture of health and wellness. All new hires will be asked to take the LoneStart Challenge and all clients of the new Wellness Center will be given the program as part of their enrollment. The hospital intends to continue to promote the initiative both on site and throughout its service area as a Community Wellness Outreach Initiative.

“I am very pleased with the results of our employee wellness initiative and congratulate the people at LoneStart on the wonderful program they have developed,” says Kirkendall.