

WISEWOMAN Program Spotlight

Losing Weight to Gain Healthy Lifestyles



COMMUNITY-CLINICAL LINKS



One goal of the Vermont WISEWOMAN Program, known as Ladies First, is to help women lose weight in a controlled and healthy way. Heart disease is the leading cause of death among women in the United States. Addressing risk factors such as obesity, elevated cholesterol, and high blood pressure can greatly reduce a woman's risk of cardiovascular disease-related illness and death. Ladies First helps women make positive changes through nutrition counseling and health coaching.

Opportunity

Among Ladies First members who have been screened for cardiovascular disease risk, 67% have overweight or obesity. Research shows that even a small amount of weight loss (5%, or 10 pounds for a 200-pound woman) can improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels ([National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, 2012](#)). Members are assessed to determine their readiness to make the lifestyle changes necessary to reach their weight and fitness goals. Good nutrition, group support, and accountability are key components to helping women achieve long-term success.

Solution

By teaming up with Weight Watchers across the state, Ladies First members receive coupons giving them access to the program at no cost for up to 6 months. For convenience, members can attend meetings at a location in their community. During meetings, women participate in regular weigh-ins, have access to community fitness resources, and are given incentives, such as fitness DVDs and healthy eating cookbooks, for their participation. Ladies First assists with transportation by providing bus passes, if needed, in order to limit barriers to participation.

Results

Of the women enrolled in Weight Watchers, 43% had a history of high blood pressure and an elevated body mass index (BMI). Thirteen women have lost more than 5% of their body weight, and nine have lost more than 10%. In addition, two women have lost more than 50 pounds. On average, the women have lost 23 pounds and 11% of their body weight. One member has achieved lifetime membership status in Weight Watchers by reaching her weight loss goals.

Sustaining Success

Ladies First will continue to offer coupons for members to participate in Weight Watchers meetings. In addition, online weight loss options, including Weight Watchers Online and FitLogix, are now being offered. Social media has also become a valuable tool to keep members motivated and to showcase members' success stories.

"I've lost 50.6 pounds in 32 weeks. The Weight Watchers coupons from Ladies First have saved my life!"

—Vermont WISEWOMAN participant

Additional Information

For more information about Vermont WISEWOMAN, visit the Ladies First program at <http://ladiesfirst.vermont.gov/providers/ladies-first-services>.

