



Y, Sumter Family Health partner for study



Jessica Fralick, left, Patti Trzcinski, right, and other Sumter Family Health Center employees listen as Daniela Bachmeier, Y healthy living director, discusses various sources of protein during their second session of Commit To Be YFIT.

PHOTO PROVIDED

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BY MISSY REESE
SPECIAL TO THE SUMTER ITEM



PERKINS



When Missy Corrigan designed and implemented her YFIT programs in 2012, never did she expect the wide range of impact they would create in Sumter and beyond.

The Sumter Family YMCA has partnered with Sumter Family Health Center to conduct a pilot study to validate the effectiveness of the health program. Corrigan, Y executive of community health, designed these nutrition education and fitness programs that teach individuals how to fuel the body to improve body composition and reduce risk of chronic diseases.

To date, 1,100 participants have completed the program and have shared their success. After changing their lifestyles through YFIT programs, many participants have been able to reduce or eliminate the need for blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes medication under their physician's care.

"We have been very pleased with the individual success reported by participants, but until now, we have lacked an actual medical study," Corrigan said.

But that's about to change with 30 health center employees participating in the pilot study of Commit to Be YFIT and YFIT Camp classes, both of which will be led by exercise nutrition specialists at the Y.

Twenty employees have begun Commit to Be YFIT for the first six weeks. Ten members of that group will continue on to complete YFIT Camp, giving them a full 12 weeks of participation. A second group of 10 employees will join the remaining group to complete the six weeks of YFIT Camp.

"The study allows us to evaluate one group who completes Commit to Be YFIT, one group who completes YFIT Camp and one group who participates in the entire 12-week process of both programs," Corrigan said.

Sumter Family Health will run blood work at weeks one, six and 12.

"The benefit for Sumter Family Health Center is that its employees receive the opportunity to improve their personal health," said David Justice, Sumter Family Health Center director of behavioral health. "Happier, healthier employees will help make our organization better. We are developing a weight management program that we plan to implement for our patients at Sumter Family Health Center. We would like to integrate YFIT programs into that. There is a huge need for this type of service in our community."

Patti Trzcinski, pediatric nurse practitioner and pilot participant, said her main goal is to lose weight and become healthier.

"My family has a history of heart disease and diabetes," she said. "This program will provide me accountability among my peers and will encourage me to reach my goals."

She said she has dieted her entire life and hopes this study will teach her the tools to create a healthy lifestyle and stick to it.

"Most of the young patients whom I treat are overweight or obese," Trzcinski said. "I feel very hypocritical to tell them to eat right and exercise when I am not following my own advice. I want to set a good example for my patients and be able to share with them what has worked for us."

Leslie Perkins, chief of operations and technology, is excited for this opportunity to go through the YFIT programs to improve his nutrition and exercise habits.

"This is a great opportunity to have a medical provider monitor the progress over these next 12 weeks," he said. "I am also looking forward to being able to speak with our patients about our experience and the effectiveness of this program."

Corrigan, who recently completed the Community Health Leadership Program with Satcher Health Leadership Institute at Morehouse School of Medicine, said the study will provide a proven intervention method to help obtain funding to expand the program to even more members of the community.

"We recognize that there are so many factors that go into improving health and that there is a great need for community strategies that address health disparities," she said. "With strategic community partnerships, we can improve the health and well-being of the community at large."

Commit to Be YFIT and YFIT Camp classes are offered to the community throughout the year. Discounts are offered to those who have a medical referral at the time of class registration.

For more information about upcoming YFIT programs, visit www.ymcasumter.org or call (803) 773-1404.

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