

Staying Healthy Conversation Notes
January 31, 2012 at Runnells Hall, Chocorua



"If you are healthy, you don't need to get fixed up." ~ Fiona Rovetti, age 7
"Wellness is our insurance" ~ conversation participant

I. BRIEF SUMMARY:

On a snowy afternoon, 22 people from around Carroll County gathered for a conversation about health; specifically about how we can support our neighbors, children, seniors and ourselves to stay healthy. The group pleasantly discovered their shared interest in wellness and the notion that health is more than simply 'not being sick'. People quickly observed that the issue is complex but could see the value of people coming together to further work on the issue with most of the group indicating an interest in continuing to get together.

Some themes, observations and questions that emerged:

- Can we collectively put forward a new paradigm that supports health?
- Health is more than an absence of illness. What is optimal health?
- Value in being a role-model; living and communicating our values around health.
- Health involves many stakeholders/influences: individuals, employers, insurers, environment (chemicals, water, air, living situation) and community.
- Do we want to spearhead this? Who is we?
- People have a role to play in their own health.
- More communication is needed – about existing resources, among practitioners and community groups and about what wellness is. How do we do this?
- Lack of cooking knowledge is barrier to healthy eating.

Some ideas that resonated with the group:

- Wellness is our insurance
- 100 things to do in Carroll County before you die (free, low-cost, etc.)
- 10% rule – don't need to convince everyone. A 10% threshold can have great influence
- Many people promoting the same ideas would have more resonance

II. WRITTEN FEEDBACK:

Two important things I learned:

- New people
- More interest than I expected
- I really like the 100 things to do in Carroll County idea
- Need to promote health & wellness in our community
- There are many ways to promote this, but need many people to promote
- We need to communicate what resources are available (not just non-profit groups) – gardens, walking trails, etc. Don't just use notices sent home from school
- Not a common definition within group of health

- There is more momentum toward health than I thought. (not disease management) Many great ideas!
- What's out there – programs, Carroll County United exists
- We want the same things to better the community
- What Carroll County United is!, 10% rule – I love it!
- Incentivizing wellness programs in health insurance, great programs in schools & communities for health

Two things I can do

- Exhibit, educate
- Stay informed, Stay engaged
- Be a role model, Encourage healthy eating
- Continue as a health coach
- Set by example, participate
- Continue doing what I am doing
- Promote healthy living, spread the word
- Motivate clients to eat better & increase physical activity
- Learn more about community resources
- Be a role model, support peers & colleagues in their pursuit of wellness
- Promote evergreen's programs, live my values

Two things we can do collectively

- Health Fair (2)
- Keep setting goals
- Keep talking
- Develop plans to promote wellness
- Markets
- Promote the new healthy paradigm
- Work to bring new ideas forward
- Work together & be examples of optimal health
- Create a resource guide, collaborate with existing programs
- Educate, Disseminate resource information
- Share this discussion with the wider community via newspaper, letters, etc.

III. REPORT-OUT NOTES FROM SMALL GROUP CONVERSATIONS:

Discussion Question 1: *How do we as a community support people to stay or become as healthy as they can?*

1. List of resources: community gardens, walking trails, organic/non-organic farms
2. Education in schools – optimal health rather than absence of illness
3. Local environment, local economy, hour exchanges, list of health providers
4. Nutrition instruction & food prep. Lack of cooking knowledge barrier to healthy eating. Relate to learning.
5. Political issue – overturned cigarette tax
6. Uninsured/underinsured
7. Insurance companies have wellness programs and incentives
8. Employers have stake in employee wellness (tax rates, attendance, productivity)

9. People as living examples (role-models) of healthy life style can empower others
10. Health fairs, events
11. Standing up for values
12. Evergreen Institute partnering with Memorial Hospital on a food & film festival
13. Better Choices/Better Living – successful program to help people deal with chronic illness – is there a similar approach to keep people healthy in the first place?
14. Communication
 - a. Health Living & Food Choices
 - b. 100 things to do in Carroll County before you die – free, low-cost, etc. (Maine example)
15. Options for people need to be convenient, safe, fun and need to know about them
16. Letter to editors, events, newspapers
17. Do we want to spearhead or be adjunct to this?
18. Ex: Wellness program in the 90s – School-based, community-wide program in Ossipee/Tuftonboro. Schools – health & nutrition; 1500 people participated – supported by schools, parents, participated, seniors.

Discussion Question #2: *What is the responsibility of individuals, community, providers? How do we facilitate collaboration or alignment between them?*

- Providers can provide support & education – incentives, wellness programs
- Individuals can work to meet their own optimal health
- Community can provide resources, information
- Companies not hiring smokers
- Education in computer age – not playing outside as much
- This generation may not live as long as their parents if we don't turn things around
- By 2030, Carroll County will have more people over 65 than under
- Ossipee concerned citizens, Gibson center – cooking classes with kids/parenting adults
- Cooperative Extension programs
- Kindness Fair – education, community garden, getting ready for growing season, resource guide
- How to reach people? Home-schooled or isolated families?
- New paradigm
- New definition of health
- Practitioners leading example with their own health
- Wellness is our insurance
- Being healthy is less-expensive than being sick
- Being self-sufficient
- Carroll County Green Team – community gardens.

The Health & Wellness Team meets monthly. To join the group call 323-8139. Visit CarrollCountyUnited.org for more information about Carroll County United. CCU is an initiative of the Lakes Region United Way.