



MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

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TO: MENDOCINO COUNTY NEWS MEDIA
FR: MENDOCINO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Ukiah, California... *February 26, 2014*

Mendocino County Employers Take On Biggest Loser Challenge!

The County of Mendocino's Biggest Loser Challenge is back for another year of weight loss fun beginning March 3rd. The Biggest Loser Challenge was created by Mendocino County Working on Wellness (MCWOW), and is loosely based on the popular reality TV show. Last spring, 613 employees (and their family members) from the County of Mendocino, Ukiah Valley Medical Center (UVMC), Frank Howard Memorial Hospital (HMH) and Mendocino Coast District Hospital (MCDH) embarked on a 12 week weight loss challenge to become the Biggest Losers – of weight that is. The partnership helped a total of 84 teams lose a combined total of 2,450 pounds through exercise and healthy eating during the three month challenge. This year, the partnership welcomes the members of the Mendocino County School Districts Staywell Program to the program.

Participants can join teams consisting of two to six people as they endeavor to become the team with the greatest percent weight loss for an ultimate goal to improve overall health. *"As a cancer survivor, I know that it is crucial for me to keep my weight under control...For several years, I have wanted to lose those pesky extra pounds, but it took the 'team' approach to motivate me sufficiently to do it!"* remarked one MCDH participant who reported a 10% weight loss in last year's challenge. New this year, the Challenge includes a Survival of the Fittest team fitness challenge for those wanting to put their fitness level to the test.

Individuals can also participate just to improve their nutrition and physical activity habits by completing 12 weekly mini-challenges. Last year's Challenge was successful in improving the culture of the work environment and thus the dialogue between employees about healthy habits. Even after the challenge ended, employees were still found working together to maintain their newfound healthy lifestyles. Break rooms and cafeterias became the scene for healthy food choices and an increased number of employees were seen incorporating physical activity into their daily work routine. UVMC CEO, Gwen Matthews shared her enthusiasm for the Biggest Loser Challenge, *"I was excited to see such an overwhelming amount of participation and excitement generated by our employees around the Biggest Loser Challenge. There was a noticeable difference in the cafeteria in the items employees decided to put on their plates."* Registered Dietitian Annie Dogali, and HMH Biggest Loser Challenge Director echoed Matthews' comments, *"It was both fun and inspirational to see each participant's progress throughout the challenge."*

The collaborative partnership allows each organization the ability to provide activities and programs through shared resources that would otherwise be impossible. This year along with walking events, the partnership will sponsor a "Halfway There Faire" that will take place during week 6 to keep the motivation high throughout the challenge. In addition, various educational opportunities are being offered as well in the form of nutrition and activity workshops.

"The Biggest Loser Challenge demonstrates what a united community like Mendocino County can accomplish if we work together," said Mendocino County CEO Carmel J. Angelo. Participating organizations are grateful for the opportunity to work collaboratively through the Biggest Loser Challenge and are excited about future partnership possibilities.

Released by:

Handwritten signature of Carmel J. Angelo in cursive.

Carmel J. Angelo
Chief Executive Officer