



Southeast Health Group expands Chronic Disease Prevention Program

By Southeast Health Group

Southeast Health Group has two new Personal Trainers on staff to assist the community in utilizing the Wellness Center at 711 Barnes in La Junta. Ayanna Marshall and David Eckhart have completed certification in personal training, adding to their expertise in teaching diabetes prevention.

“David and Ayanna are an important part of our chronic disease prevention team,” said Anne Russell, Integrated Care Supervisor for SHG. “Their roles as lifestyle coaches and personal trainers are critical in helping people learn to eat right, exercise and prevent debilitating chronic diseases like diabetes.”

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For the past two years, Marshall and Eckhart have been teaching “Prevent T2” classes, aimed at identifying people at risk for type 2 diabetes and teaching skills to prevent onset of the disease. They have had 33 participants in Otero, Crowley, and Prowers County, with an average weight loss of 5.9%, or about 10-12 pounds per participant. Grant funding for the project ends in June, but SHG

finds the program too important to stop.

According to recent data from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, rates for diabetes in southeast Colorado are nearly twice the state average.

Research has shown that people with prediabetes who take part in a structured lifestyle change program can cut their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 58% (71% for people over 60 years old). Follow-up studies 10 years after completing the program have shown that people who completed a diabetes prevention lifestyle change program were one third less likely to develop type 2 diabetes.

“Our plan is to continue to provide the classes pro bono as part of our Community Benefit programming,” said Russell.

“We will be reaching out to the larger employers in the region, asking them to include Prevent T2 classes in their employee assistance programs at no charge to the employers.” SHG will be absorbing the cost of the program in exchange for strengthening community partnerships. “As an organization, we want to be recognized for addressing all



David and Ayanna, Lifestyle Coaches and Personal Trainers.

population health needs, not just behavioral health,” said Russell.

Marshall and Eckhart will assist people at risk of developing chronic disease in designing at-home fitness programs. They will offer more intensive one-on-one training and free wellness center memberships to encourage participation. Anyone interested in the program can take a short quiz to see if they qualify.

“Diabetes is a serious health problem in southeast Colorado, and we hope to make a difference—one person and one family at a time—in reducing the impact of this disease,” said Russell.

For more information about personal training services or diabetes prevention classes, call Southeast Health Group at 1-800-511-5446, or visit www.southeasthealthgroup.org.

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