

A Roadmap for Wellness Fall 2004

To challenge all members of this church to become good stewards of their own physical and mental health by attending to preventive care, personal health habits, diet, exercise, and recreation, and by making prudent use of health-care resources. “Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor”

Summary: While we have made inroads at meeting the above challenge, we must continue to forge ahead in our drive to engage healthy leaders who enhance lives. This document summarizes what we are doing to meet this challenge, based on the foundation that has already been laid.

Mapping the future – Let’s Get Moving

As we become more aware of the state of our health, we recognize the need for healthier living. The good news is the 2004 online Mayo Clinic Health Risk Assessment (HRA) found one in five rostered leaders report a desire to change their behavior: to exercise more, to eat better, and to lose weight. We believe that change is not only necessary, but also possible.

Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives...so let’s get moving!

The focus of the ELCA Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives initiative in 2005 is *increased physical activity and decreased caloric intake*. The initiative will concentrate on shaping attitudes, changing behaviors and improving health. Our challenge is complex, but achievable:

- Meet our leaders where they are in their wellness journey
- Engage and challenge them in a fruitful manner
- Partner with them on their journey in a supportive manner
- Meaningfully celebrate with them when they achieve results

Below is a partial list of activities being employed to promote Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives, challenge leaders to assess their own states of wellness and encourage leaders to embark on the journey to better health:

- **A new Wellness Coordinator, Tammy L. Devine, Diaconal Minister, R.N.** joined the wellness team. She will provide whole-person health promotion, education and inspiration to the members of the ELCA. Tammy joined the Board of Pensions staff in October 2004 and will work collaboratively with the Division for Ministry by advocating for a culture within the ELCA that supports health awareness and improvement, in addition to developing and implementing a comprehensive health related education plan. As the coordinator, she will be available on request to assist synods and institutions for presentations, consulting and coaching.
- **Promote www.elcaforwellness.org** through a variety of vehicles. The quality of the information and the ability to provide custom content aimed specifically at our audience of ELCA leaders continues to be a valuable wellness resource. By using the *Mayo Clinic Guide to Self-Care* as an incentive, registrations to the Mayo Clinic/ELCA web site have increased dramatically. Currently over 10,000 people are registered.
- **Encourage utilization of the 2005 Health Risk Assessment (Jan. 6 – March 13, 2005)** as a way for leaders to assess their health, compare their current health state with where they were a year ago (available to those who completed the HRA in 2004) and set goals to improve in the next year. As in 2004, the results of the assessment will be used to monitor health risk factors and help in planning for future wellness activities.

- **Provide incentives that support our goals for 2005** by encouraging increased activity and decreased caloric intake, such as pedometers – a widely recognized tool in helping people set and assess goals every day.
- **Launch goal setting and resolutions for a healthy 2005** that are embodied in the acronym SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Trackable. Mayo Clinic provides resources to support SMART goal-setting through www.elcaforwellness.org and “A Year of Healthy Living Ideas,” the 2005 Mayo Clinic calendar produced in collaboration with the Board of Pensions.

Healthy Supplements

To supplement our emphasis on increased physical activity and decreased caloric intake, we will also lift up the following messages as components of living a healthier life:

- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet** – Strive for at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, and reduce intake of sugar and fat.
- **Increase health literacy** – We all need to be better-equipped to understand and comprehend health-related information, and to effectively interact with health care providers.
- **Avoid risky behaviors** – This is traditionally thought of in terms of alcohol or drug use, smoking, and safety. It should also include sedentary behaviors such as watching TV and time spent on the computer.
- **Know your family health history when possible** – Understand your risk. Take advantage of preventive benefits offered by the health plan.

Health benefits to support leaders on wellness journey

The Board of Pensions is in a unique position to help ELCA leaders on their wellness journey by removing perceived barriers that may preclude members taking action. The Board of Pensions is strengthening the health and wellness aspects of its health plan design, effective January 1, 2005, in the following ways:

- **Expanding and restructuring benefits to pay for preventive services**, which we believe is consistent with our plan to emphasize increased physical activity. Coverage of an annual physical examination will facilitate the initiation of increased physical activity.
- **Covering treatment for smoking cessation and weight loss**, when provided by an eligible provider, may give members the extra help they need to realize their goals.
- **Enhancing the wellness component of the plan’s behavioral health benefit** can make it more inviting for members to seek help for non-medical, stress-producing issues before they become more serious. In addition, expanding the list of covered services to include counseling for tobacco dependence and weight issues will promote members’ physical well-being.

We view these wellness-related benefits changes as an investment in members’ health and wellness and very much in concert with the following Churchwide strategic objective: *Assist this church to **bring forth and support faithful, wise, and courageous leaders** whose vocations serve God’s mission in a pluralistic world.*

Background – detours and success stories on the road to wellness

Understanding and addressing the health of the ELCA rostered leaders began in 2001 with a survey by the ELCA Division for Ministry and Department for Research and Evaluation that uncovered stress and depression; excessive weight and the lack of physical activity; and high cholesterol, high blood pressure and risk of heart disease as the major health concerns. The results were conveyed in the *2002 Report on Ministerial Health and Wellness*, authored by Dr. Gwen Halaas, past Director of Ministerial Health and Wellness for the ELCA. The survey also revealed that more than half of our rostered leaders reported stress and job stress.

In 2004, Dr. Halaas prepared a new report based on data collected from rostered leaders and seminarians through the Mayo Clinic’s Health Risk Assessment (HRA) reporting data. The new report

found high cholesterol, high blood pressure and arthritis among the most prevalent medical conditions: the HRA also showed inactivity, poor nutrition and overweight continue to plague our leaders. Although the 2004 report “cast a wider net” by including seminarians, the overall outcome was similar to the previous report: The health and wellness of the ELCA’s rostered leaders is a serious concern in the life of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – its mission and ministry.

Fortunately, there are growing numbers of rostered leaders throughout the ELCA who have taken charge of their health and wellness. Following is a summary of how three pastors at different junctures on their wellness journey are meeting their individual challenges and making a positive difference in their lives and the lives of those around them.

Wellness Journeys

We continue to receive reports of the “wellness journeys” of those who have responded to the call for health and wellness. Two pastors and a synod assistant are some of the many who are written:

- A pastor, knowing he, like his father, would need a kidney transplant, cultivated a healthy lifestyle that included walking, biking and mountain climbing, and stayed healthy a decade longer than his diagnosis predicted. He said, “We do have some impact on how we live and die. I want to live life as fully and freely as possible for as long as I can. It’s all the grace of God.”
- An avid runner and aerobics instructor, this staff assistant prided herself on being healthy. Then she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Now as a cancer survivor her healthy attitude is even stronger and inspires those around her. “We at the synod office are paying more attention to the foods we eat, and are exercising on a regular basis, often walking at lunchtime as schedules permit.”
- An 80-year-old retired pastor still works as an interim pastor 50 hours per week. He lifts weights and plays handball 3 times a week. His wife is 79, exercises and is still very active. The two make healthy food choices. Their very full and active lives are made possible by their stewardship of their minds and bodies. He is bothered to see many other ELCA pastors overweight and not taking care of themselves.

Health and wellness – making it personal

The wellness journey is a personal one. Everyone follows a unique path – a path where the journey is also the destination. The Board of Pensions and Division for Ministry are committed to working to provide you the tools and resources our leaders need to forge their own roads. Pr. Ronald T. Glusenkamp (Board of Pensions) and Pr. A. Craig Settlage (Division for Ministry) are the lead staff in supporting this commitment to “Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives.”

Here’s what you can do:

- Register at www.elcaforwellness.org
- Take the Mayo Clinic HRA in 2005, and invite others to do so
- Become a role model of increasing physical activity and decreasing caloric intake

Shape • Change • Improve