

The Healthy Living Center: Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Inc. (CDPHP)



Creating a healthy community requires health plans to reach people outside of their physician's office. Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Inc. (CDPHP) partners with other community organizations to expand the reach of its care and connect with people in their daily lives.

Prescriptions, Pilates and Pasta: Care Beyond the Doctor's Office

Residents of Albany, N.Y., can take a fitness class, ask questions about their medications and learn about healthy eating — all where they shop for groceries and all for free.

Although advances in medicine have made treating illnesses more effective than ever, much of a person's health is still out of a doctor's reach. Clinical care affects only 20 percent of overall health outcomes, and more influential factors, including physical environment, lifestyle behaviors and social and economic forces, are typically outside the realm of medical care.

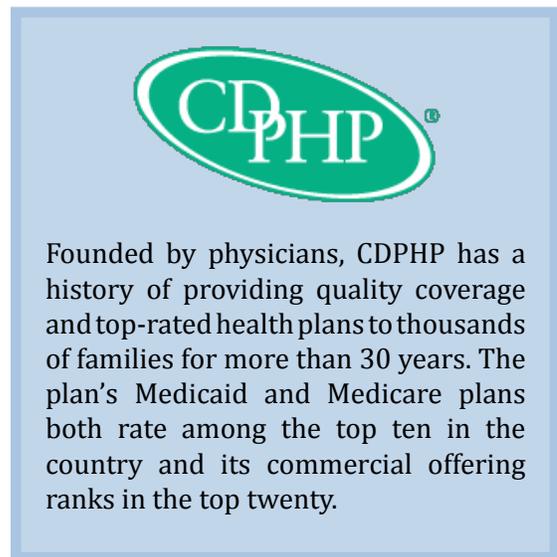
To foster health and not just treat illness, health plans are exploring ways to reach beyond the walls of the doctor's office and meet people as they go about their daily lives. Through partnerships with organizations embedded in their communities, plans are able to further promote elements of healthy living, such as exercise, nutrition and health awareness.

In 2013, Capital District Physicians' Health Plan, Inc. (CDPHP) joined two other prominent organizations in Albany — the YMCA and Hannaford Supermarkets — to offer the community a free place to learn about healthy eating, fitness and health care. Named the Healthy Living Center and conveniently located inside a large, popular Hannaford supermarket, the 5,600-square-foot center offers a variety of programs that cover exercise, nutrition, senior health, medication safety and disease management.

As of June 2014, seven months after the Healthy Living Center opened, 1,366 people have registered as members of the center and taken part in the programs it has to offer. Virtually all of those people continue to visit the center on a regular basis.

Community Partnerships: Working Together for a Healthier Albany

The idea for the Healthy Living Center began as a conversation between executives from CDPHP and the Capital District YMCA. The two organizations had already partnered together and were in regular contact, but they wanted to deepen their commitment to community health. With traditional fitness



“CDPHP takes seriously our responsibility to support the health, vibrancy and quality of life for the communities we serve. Whether you’re taking a wellness class or selecting health care coverage, the Healthy Living Center will provide a convenient space for local residents to meet their health and wellness needs.”

John Bennett, M.D., President
and CEO of CDPHP



and wellness programs already in place, they sought a creative and fresh approach to providing free and accessible opportunities for healthy living.

Their brainstorming focused on ways to make health programs more accessible to residents as they juggle the responsibilities of their busy lives. The name that grabbed CDPHP’s interest was Hannaford Supermarkets. Hannaford was already an active participant in the community for nutrition-based services, but had not yet ventured into other areas of healthy living. With each organization offering a different area of expertise, all three groups agreed that a partnership could offer the community a new and more comprehensive approach to healthy living.

A programming committee with representatives from each of the three organizations was formed to brainstorm ways to collaborate and leverage each organization’s expertise. Together, the three businesses developed a set of classes and programs that blended the unique services of each organization. After months of thoughtful planning, the Healthy Living Center opened in October 2013.

Each organization takes the lead in one of three primary areas of focus: CDPHP in wellness, the YMCA in exercise and Hannaford in nutrition improvement. The committee specifically agreed to open the center inside one of Hannaford’s busiest supermarkets, located along a heavily trafficked bus route and bustling business and residential corridor. The area also includes many providers’ offices and a heavy

concentration of Medicaid members. By choosing this location, the center targets the populations whose health is most adversely affected by circumstances beyond a doctor’s reach.

The Healthy Living Center: The Path to a Better Life

The center offers a variety of classes, programs and workshops led by certified instructors, registered dietitians and pharmacists from CDPHP, the YMCA and Hannaford. Topics cover a wide range of areas, including fitness, nutrition, senior health, weight management, stress management, medication safety and chronic disease management. No membership is required to access the center; any interested person may simply walk in free of charge. The center is open seven days a week and offers classes in the morning, afternoon and evening.

The programming committee continues to meet on a monthly basis to assess the center’s progress and tweak programming in order to best cater to people’s needs and interests. The committee is focused on providing opportunities in each of the center’s core areas of service: wellness, nutrition, fitness and CDPHP member service.

Wellness

CDPHP leads the charge for the center's wellness classes, such as *Release the Pressure* — a program that stresses the importance of managing high blood pressure by properly taking medication and understanding blood pressure readings — and *Weigh 2 Be* — one of the center's most popular classes, which focuses on strategies for weight management. *Weigh 2 Be* helps participants develop a personalized plan for lasting weight loss through behavior modification, nutrition and physical activity. It also includes a weekly weigh-in to help class members see the benefits of their hard work. CDPHP health promotion specialists partner with Hannaford pharmacists and dieticians, as well as YMCA fitness specialists to deliver these programs.

Fitness

The Albany YMCA provides fitness specialists during all hours of operation who teach classes and provide guidance to people using the center's exercise equipment.

Additional instructors from the YMCA visit the center to lead programs catered specifically to different needs. For example, a 30-minute fitness class for seniors improves strength, aerobic capacity, endurance, coordination, balance and flexibility for everyday functioning. The *Beginners 30-Minute Circuit* class works at a slower pace and builds confidence for individuals who are new to exercise, and Primetime meets at 5:45 p.m. during the week to accommodate people on their way home from work.

Other fitness classes are directed at clinical conditions, such as the twice-a-week *Pedaling for Parkinson's* class. Pedaling a bicycle at a high cadence has been proven to help Parkinson's patients delay or, in some cases, relieve their symptoms and improve their quality of life. Using the center's stationary bikes, people affected by Parkinson's are offered a way to manage their condition on a regular basis.

"The Healthy Living Center is an amazing gift to the community," says Regina Wagner-Garhartt of Colonie, N.Y. Wagner-Garhartt was picking up groceries for an elderly neighbor when she saw a Zumba sign hanging inside the local Hannaford supermarket and decided to check it out.

"The Healthy Living Center is an amazing gift to the community."

A small-business owner on a tight budget, she said the Healthy Living Center initially appealed because it offers dozens of free fitness classes. She is now a regular at the Healthy Living Center, visiting at least three times a week for Zumba, spinning and circuit classes.

"The Center has given me hope. The people and staff are so supportive and welcoming. It doesn't feel like an exclusive gym," says Wagner-Garhartt, who is already seeing positive results from the classes. She has seen a dramatic increase in her strength and flexibility and now fits into smaller clothing. "I tell everyone I know about the Healthy Living Center!"

Nutrition

To improve nutrition, Hannaford has assigned a dietician to the center who leads a variety of programs that educate people about healthy foods. Nutrition offerings include an array of affordable and healthy recipes, an online calculator to help with weight loss, and classes such as *Foods to Power Your Workouts* and *Going Green Close to Home*, which teach members about natural, organic and local foods. Given the center's location in the supermarket, class attendees are able to use what they learn as they shop for their groceries after class.



A representative from the Healthy Living Center works with one of the center's many visitors.

CDPHP Member Services

CDPHP representatives are also on-site to answer questions about health insurance. The plan's goal is to create a convenient place for people in the community to ask questions about health insurance, including what type to buy and how to enroll in a variety of insurance products. The center opened its doors the same day that the ACA exchanges launched, and center staff is trained to field questions about enrolling in the online marketplace, Medicaid, Medicare, or directly through CDPHP.

The First Step is Walking Through the Door: Community Outreach Efforts

A flyer for the Healthy Living Center Open House. The top left features the logo for the Healthy Living Center. Below it, the text reads: "Join us for our Open House Saturday, October 5, at 12 p.m." The main body of the flyer is divided into several sections: "Putting Our Community's Health First" which describes the center's mission; "Get Some Shopping Done, Take a Class" which lists the center's location and hours; "Need More Information?" which provides a website and phone number; and "We look forward to seeing you!" which includes the center's address and phone number. At the bottom, there is a section that says "Present this voucher at our Open House and receive a valuable coupon from Hannaford." with the Hannaford logo.

The Healthy Living Center was strategically placed in the Hannaford supermarket to attract a high volume of people, but it is often a challenge to get those with the greatest needs to visit for the first time.

The initial outreach efforts began at a grassroots level. The center opened its doors with minimal programs and offerings so that its leaders could gauge the interest level in specific classes and then adjust the course schedule according to demand. In the first weeks after the center opened, people tended to drop into classes without signing up in advance, their curiosity piqued while shopping for groceries.

In the ensuing months, enthusiasm spread via word-of-mouth to the point that classes were routinely reaching their maximum capacity. As a result, class attendees must now register online to guarantee a spot in a specific class – and while online, they can see the multitude of educational materials available on the center's website.

In addition to traditional emails and newsletters, the center has embraced creative ways to entice visitors. As one of many initiatives, Hannaford created grocery bag stuffers for the checkout line. At the bottom of every stuffer is a coupon offering items that range from discounts on groceries to a free pedometer if the shopper visits the center. Yoga classes on Saturdays have been another particularly successful initiative for attracting new people, many of whom sign up for membership and return for more classes.

Membership has steadily increased each month the center has been open, and with news of the center's successes spreading through word-of-mouth, local newspapers and strategic outreach, it is expected to continue to rise dramatically.

Only by Working Together

Through the power of partnerships, CDPHP has been able to extend its reach of care beyond the clinical setting, and along with the Capital District YMCA and Hannaford Supermarkets, offer the community a roadmap to a healthier life. Together, each organization is able to accomplish goals it could not alone.

With the Healthy Living Center, CDPHP is providing its community with a modern, fully-accommodating way to embrace a healthier lifestyle and has taken a significant step toward addressing the social determinants of health.

The **Alliance of Community Health Plans (ACHP)** is a national leadership organization bringing together innovative health plans and provider groups that are among America's best at delivering affordable, high-quality coverage and care. For more information, contact Rachel Schwartz at rschwartz@achp.org.

Our [Innovation Profiles series](#) describes how ACHP plans are working with communities, provider groups, patients and other stakeholders to improve the quality and affordability of care and the overall health of their communities.