

**BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD**

  
2013

**Advances in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management  
Award Winner - Stratford Family Health Team  
Christine Doroslovac; R.Kin; Kaitlyn Hartung, RN; Jessica Janssens, RD**

## **The Stratford Family Health Team's Metabolic Exercise Program**



Chronic-disease management programs emphasize the importance of exercise for controlling diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, but the Stratford Family Health Team found many of their patients didn't follow through on that knowledge: some because of pain or lack of motivation, some because they could not afford to join a gym, or didn't know what exercise to try or which machines would be best for them.

In October 2012, the team set out to fix that problem by contracting a kinesiologist to develop a practical, evidence-based exercise program that would give participants the knowledge and skills they needed to improve their health through exercise. Each program enrolls six people to go to a gym twice a week for six weeks, for a total of 60 people per year. The 90-minute sessions include a short educational component, a cardiovascular workout, strength training and stretching. They conclude with a short goal-setting talk.

The generosity of three local gyms — Anytime Fitness, Healthworks and the YMCA, which allowed the program to use their facilities at no charge — made the program possible (two of the three have offered discounted memberships to participants when they complete the course).

Follow-up on the program is done by registered nurses, who measure participants' blood pressure, heart rate, A1C, cholesterol and how far they can walk in six minutes — before the program begins, at its conclusion and three and six months later. After a year, those measurements show participants are healthier. Participants are also asked to rate the program; they have asked for education sessions before the sessions and for follow-up support from the registered nurse when the program is over. The Stratford team has shared details of the exercise program with other family health teams, one-on-one and at the family health team research conference.