

My Own Weight Loss Journey

by Angella Robertson, Mark Pullam's sister

I too went on the weight loss journey. As Mark's article in the September issue of *Siletz News* mentioned, I have Type II diabetes and high blood pressure and I was extremely overweight. I had read about the laparoscopic gastric banding procedure (lab band) and studied all the risks very carefully and suggested it to Mark.

I knew I had to wait until my insurance approved this kind of weight loss surgery before I could even apply. After a long year of waiting, a great deal of paperwork and lots of pretests (I got most of my pretests right there at the Siletz Clinic), I finally was approved for the surgery.

Then the hard part of it all was finding just the right surgeon to do my surgery. I knew I was a very stubborn person and my surgeon had to be one who was very firm.

I searched in Oregon and Missouri and finally found someone in Arkansas who was just the right surgeon for me. I went to two of his seminars and both times got a very good feeling about him. So I chose to go with this wonderful surgeon.

I had my surgery in March 2009 and I have been doing really well. But don't

let anyone tell you weight loss surgery is the easy way out of losing weight. It's work – every day.

The surgery is a tool for losing weight. You have to learn to eat right and there are a whole lot of lifestyle changes. I learned I had to get off the couch and walk or move every day.

I am glad to say I now walk Monday through Friday. My feet hit the floor at 3:30 a.m., I drink my protein drink and head out the door to meet my walking partner by 4 a.m. We walk for at least an hour every session and are up to a little over three hours on some sessions.

When I first started walking, my first walking partner was 91 years old. That woman has now passed on, but I told myself if she could do it so could I.

With the help of all my family members and friends and most of all the man upstairs, I have been able to continue this weight loss journey. I have a ways to go still. But what I have accomplished so far is this: I have gotten off all my diabetic medications (second day after surgery) and off my blood pressure medications. I now can walk between 10,000 and 26,000 steps a day, I have lots of energy and I have lost 126 pounds so far.



Angella Robertson, before (left) and after

I hope that Contract Health Services will find the funding to help our people finance this weight loss surgery. I had to pay for my own, but maybe in the future we can save so many Tribal people by helping with the costs of this surgery.

These weight loss surgeries can prevent so many health issues and cure many more. I encourage anyone interested in this kind of surgery to go to www.lapband.com and get the correct information about

this surgery.

Again, a special thank you to my family, which has been there every step of the way. And to Mark and to Cindy Urbach for keeping my surgery a secret until I could cope with the fears of getting the surgery for myself.

It's easy to encourage someone you love to get it but very hard to take that first step on the thousand-mile walk Mark and I are on.

Facts About Smoking You May Want to Know

- U.S. cigarette manufacturers now make more money selling cigarettes in countries around the globe than they do selling to Americans.
- The American brands Marlboro, Kool, Camel and Kent own roughly 70 percent of the global cigarette market.
- In most countries around the world, the legal age to purchase tobacco products is now 18, raised from 16, while in Japan the age minimum is 20.
- Scientists claim the average smoker will lose 14 years of their life because of smoking. This does not necessarily mean that a smoker will die young – and they may live out a normal lifespan.
- The states with the highest percentage of smokers are Kentucky (28.7), Indiana (27.3) and Tennessee (26.8), while the states with the fewest are Utah (11.5), California (15.2) and Connecticut (16.5).
- Cigarettes can contain more than 4,000 ingredients, which when burned also can produce more than 200 compound chemicals. Many of these compounds have been linked to lung damage.
- Nicotine reaches the brain within 10 seconds after smoke is inhaled. It has been found in every part of the body and in breast milk.

If you found that reading these facts interests you in quitting smoking, please contact me for information on how to quit smoking and some incentives I have to offer you.

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Tooth Talk: WIC, WIC, Hurrah! Prevention Reduces Health Care Costs

By Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Prevention. We, the Royal We, you and me included, would like to keep problems from happening.

We would like to keep tooth fillings and crowns from being needed, dentures too. We would like everyone to be comfortable with the teeth they were born with. Healthy teeth and mouths make for more comfortable sleeping, school days, work days and general body health.

Prevention saves you time, time saved not going to see the doctor, driving to a dentist's office, driving to pick up prescriptions and time taking prescriptions. The time saved by being healthy may not be of value to you if you love coming to the dentist. In that case, practice prevention. We at the clinic will make arrangements for your visiting pleasure.

Consider the Payer

Consider the payer for oral health care. The payer could be you, the government, your Tribe or some combination of these. Keeping the cost of providing oral

health care at a minimum is important. Prevention is one way to decrease the costs of health care and keep everyone healthy and out of pain.

A filling is cheaper than a crown. Regular dental examinations and cleanings are cheaper still, are more comfortable and are still needed after the filling and crown are done.

Doesn't prevention cost money? Yes, it does, but not as much as one might think.

Consider folic acid supplementation for pregnant women. A deficiency of folic acid in the bodies of pregnant women can cause a serious nerve problem called neural tube defects (NTD).

Without folic acid, infants born with NTD will need \$50,000 of medical care in the first year of their lives. A child without this defect will generally utilize \$8,000 of medical care in their first year of life.

A child with NTD will need \$15,000 of care each year from age 1-17. The child without NTD will utilize \$1,200 per year each year from age 1-17.

WIC Programs Save Money

Did you know that WIC (Women, Infants and Children) programs have saved Oregon \$2.3 million dollars? That's money saved on dental costs for children who participated in WIC programs in our state. Money spent on preventing disease, including dental disease, saves the larger amounts of dollars needed to treat disease.

Medical costs also are decreased in Oregon because of WIC programs. For every \$1 spent for WIC programs in Oregon, \$3 in medical costs is saved.

"WIC is a program for pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to six weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends). WIC also serves breastfeeding women (up to infant's 1st birthday), non-breastfeeding postpartum women (up to six months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends), infants (up to 1st birthday) and children up to their 5th birthday.

"The following benefits are provided to WIC participants: supplemental nutritious foods, nutrition education and

counseling at WIC clinics and screening and referrals to other health, welfare and social services."

If you or someone you know might like to participate in a WIC program, contact the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), a federal agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, at 703-305-2746 or wichq-web@fns.usda.gov; or visit www.fns.usda.gov/fns.

WIC Programs serve 45 percent of all infants born in the United States.

With government and private health insurance very much on the public's mind, this is one program that actually does reduce health costs – medical and dental costs – with prevention.

Unless indicated the above information is summarized from a presentation titled: Cost Effectiveness In Maternal-Child Preventive Dental Care Strategies, by Kiet A. Ly, MD, MPH, Northwest Center to Reduce Oral Health Disparities, University of Washington.

1 www.fns.usda.gov/vic/aboutwic/wicatalance.htm