

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2009

Contact: Michele Hutchins
(603) 238-6468



SMH Employees Take Medical Fitness 70,000 Step Challenge

PLYMOUTH, N.H.--- Thirty-nine Speare Memorial Hospital employees recently took the 70,000 steps in seven days challenge as part of the Medical Fitness Association's goal to promote an increase in physical activity for people all ages.

Equal to walking 35 miles in a week, the challenge promoted walking five miles per day as recommended by the Surgeon General. Together, the SMH employees far exceeded expectations by logging 3,124,414 steps, the equivalent of 1,562 miles. Kristi Brooker, environmental services department at SMH, was the high stepper logging a total of 174,819 steps. She was followed by Lois Parmelee, medical assistant, with 141,880 steps and Meredith Housemen, RN in the ICU, with 140,598 steps.

SMH Stepping Out With New Medical Fitness Program

Medical fitness is at the forefront of a growing wellness trend in healthcare to encourage people to strive for healthier lives, through active participation in their own health plan. Speare Memorial Hospital's Rehabilitation Services will be offering a new medical fitness program later this year/early 2010 once the medical office building at Boulder Point opens.

Says Director of Rehabilitation Services Gillian Cavezzali, "Hospitals and healthcare institutions are offering these wellness programs for the simple reason that exercise can prevent, improve or control chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes and arthritis. People who live healthier lives need medical services less often and lower health care costs for these individuals can be very attractive in this day and age."

Cavezzali stresses that going to a medically-based fitness program is not like going to a traditional gym or fitness center. Each member's program is individually tailored based on a health risk assessment, disease management programs, education and regular health screenings. The purpose of medical fitness is to help members achieve greater health through emphasis on a goal oriented, safe exercise regime supervised by qualified, credentialed exercise professionals.

"With medical fitness, the fear factor of 'measuring up' at the gym is taken away," explains Cavezzali. "Workouts are a combination of cardio and strength training with support of the staff always close at hand." Medical referral or clearance by a physician may be required.

SMH's physical therapy and occupational therapy services will also be moving to the Boulder Point medical office building, once it opens in early 2010. The rehabilitation professionals will be working side by side with the medical fitness program.

For more information or questions regarding the Medical Fitness program being developed by Rehabilitation Services at Speare Memorial Hospital, call (603) 238-2225. Speare Memorial Hospital is a 24-hour, acute care, non-profit community hospital and health care provider serving Plymouth and the communities of central New Hampshire for more than a century. Visit online at www.spearehospital.com.

#####