



For Immediate Release
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Community Fitness for Diabetes program launched

The Wellness Institute and its community partners, YMCA-YWCA Winnipeg and Youville Centre are launching a program to help people with type 2 diabetes manage their condition with safe, regular exercise.

The Community Fitness for Diabetes program will support groups of participants with type 2 diabetes. Certified Exercise Professionals will lead the program at the West Portage Y, at the Wellness Institute at Seven Oaks Hospital and in a community facility in southeast Winnipeg.

The program will include 8 weeks of group exercise, lifestyle and self-management counselling. Participants will be supported in developing an exercise maintenance plan and offered a monthly maintenance class.

“As a family medicine practitioner, I see patients with type 2 diabetes every day and I know that they need support to become active and to change their diet,” said Dr. Kevin Saunders, a family doctor who also serves as Wellness Institute’s Medical Advisor. “I can prescribe the lifestyle change and they’ll give it a good try, but the medical literature shows that more will be successful at making a permanent change with this kind of support.”

The project is being funded by a Winnipeg Foundation grant of \$40,000. Earlier funding by pharmaceutical companies Boehringer Ingelheim and Eli Lilly funded the adaptation and preliminary testing of the program model. Wellness Institute funded the development of the project and a screening tool to ensure participants are ready and safe to exercise.

“We can offer programming like this in our facility, but not everyone can come to Wellness Institute,” said Executive Director Casie Nishi. “We want to extend our exercise and coaching expertise into the community and help other organizations to improve services for diabetes so we can prevent complications and secondary conditions such cardiovascular and kidney disease.”

YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg President and CEO Kent Paterson says his organization believes innovative community partnerships are an effective way of achieving a more sustainable health system and responding to such pressing issues as reduction of health care costs and chronic disease prevention. “We know that programs like this have made an impact in other Canadian cities and the United States, and if we can work with health agencies to help our community be well, that fits well with our vision and mandate.”

Youville Centre has provided diabetes education in south Winnipeg for over a decade. For the last two years Wellness Institute has collaborated with Youville Centre to provide contract Exercise Professionals for their diabetes education programming.

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“We know our participants need to get active and we know they need more than encouragement, but we’re not exercise professionals,” said Executive Director Hébert-Saindon. “By working together more Winnipeggers will get the help they need to control their diabetes.”

The three organizations will form a steering group to implement the one-year project, refining the program on the go, and then evaluating it as a model for encouraging safe exercise for managing type 2 diabetes at any recreational facility.

Anyone interested in participating in the program should contact Program Coordinator Stacy Boone, at 204-632-3944 or go to www.wellnessinstitute.ca.

Media Contact: **Toby Maloney, Public Relations Manager**
204-632-3341 or tmaloney@sogh.mb.ca