

VA Holds Obesity Awareness Walk in Tulsa

The Eastern Oklahoma VA Health Care System (EOVAHCS) MOVE! Program teamed up with WHEELS Global Foundation and the VFW Post 577 to hold a 'NObesity Revolution' 2K Walk on May 20 in Tulsa.

The goal of the event was to inform Veterans and their families about the dangers of obesity and to encourage healthy eating and exercise. According to VA statistics, 80 percent of Veterans are considered overweight or obese which is more than the general population.

Before the 2K walk, the MOVE! Program held a ceremony at the VFW Post 577, which featured brief remarks from Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum, Tulsa Health Department Director Dr. Bruce Dart and EOVAHCS Director Mark Morgan.

Dr. Uma Koduri, EOVAHCS Primary Care Physician, was the main speaker for the event and spoke about the 5-2-1-0 Concept for Childhood Obesity and the modified 5-2-1-0 Concept for Adult Obesity.

5-2-1-0 Concept for Childhood Obesity

- 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- 2 hours or less of recreational screen time per day
- 1 hour or more of physical activity per day
- 0 sugary drinks per day (drink more water and low fat milk)

Modified 5-2-1-0 Concept for Adult Obesity

- 5 fruits and vegetables. Half your plate should be fresh fruits and vegetables. Portion control - choose a small plate and avoid second helpings
- 2 hours or less of screen time. Avoid too much sitting. Get up and move at least every 90 minutes.
- 1 hour or more of physical activity. Aim for at least 150 minutes per week. Can be done in doses of 10 minutes at a time.
- 0 sugary drinks & soda. Drink more water.

Muamer Dajdic, a motivational speaker from Canada, also told his inspirational weight loss story. Dajdic survived war in Yugoslavia and emigrated to Canada to escape the war.

To cope with the memories of the war, he turned to junk food and weighed almost 500 lbs. Through healthy eating and exercise, he lost more than 300 lbs.

Following the informative presentations, approximately 70 Veterans in the MOVE! Program, VA staff and members of the public participated in the 2K walk in Centennial Park.

Dr. Koduri said she hopes the NObesity Revolution 2K Walk will catch on with not only other VA medical centers, but with the American public.

"This event is a pilot program for a nationwide campaign to fight obesity among Veterans and the community," said Koduri. "Our goal is for other VA Medical Centers and organizations to duplicate this event so we can make a difference in obesity awareness nationwide. One of our event sponsors, WHEELS Global Foundation, is committed to raise funds for 100 similar events."

Last September, the EOVAHCS MOVE! Program also organized a "Wear Yellow Month" Walk at the Ernest Childers VA Outpatient Clinic in Tulsa. The MOVE! Program hopes to make "Wear Yellow Obesity Awareness Month in September" a nationwide event similar to Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.

Platinum sponsors for the NObesity Revolution 2K Walk include St. Francis Health System and St. John Health System. Additional partners include AAPI-Tulsa Chapter, Walk World Walkathon Organization, Blue Star Mothers of America - Tulsa Chapter, and Subway.