Stasia lost 50 pounds with the Mercy Weight Loss Program

Get the details on the Mercy Red Dress Breakfast

Pictured: Stasia Brannon, Dubuque, Iowa
It’s such an honor picking up this column where Rusty left off. He wrote his 142nd and last Health Watch article at the time of his retirement from Mercy Medical Center, which was effective on October 2nd. Rusty paved a clear pathway for me to follow as I write my first Health Watch column and begin in my role as direction health care is headed and I am eager to work with our talented team to create opportunities which empower consumers, in partnership with others in the community, to achieve better health. I look forward to discussing some of our efforts with you in future columns.

I am excited to lead Mercy during this very dynamic time in health care and look forward to sharing some of my thoughts in Health Watch.

Mercy’s new president. As I start down this road, I am deeply grateful to Rusty for his many years of leadership in service to Mercy and our great community, and for all that he has taught me along the way. I worked with Rusty for the past 16 years while in my former role as vice president for patient care services and chief nursing officer. I remember him commenting early on about how brief our time in these leadership roles is in the context of the long and amazing history of those who have gone before us; and how precious the opportunity to make that time count in advancing our mission. Well, Rusty definitely made his time count. He should be very proud of his many accomplishments and the significant progress Mercy made while he was at the helm.

I’ve been asked numerous times in these first weeks on the job why I was interested in pursuing the president position. The answer is easy. I love Mercy and our team of over 1,300 colleagues, our physicians and other providers, and the many supporters who give so much to ensure that the people we serve have the very best experience and outcomes while under our care. These people are my inspiration and it is truly my honor to serve them in this new way. I strongly believe in the I have also been asked by many folks my thoughts about the transition from chief nursing officer (part of my former role) to president. I have had the privilege of a lot of good experience to prepare me for this new chapter in my career, along with many wonderful people who have mentored and believed in me along the way, beginning with my parents, so I feel very ready to take this step. I do think being a nurse is an advantage. Compassionate, patient-centered care is at the core of what we do at Mercy, and nurses are experts at caring. My nursing perspective keeps me grounded and shapes my thinking and decision making in a way that will always put our patients first, which should serve the organization and the community well.

I am excited to lead Mercy during this very dynamic time in health care and look forward to sharing some of my thoughts in Health Watch, and to hearing from many of you along the way.

In the words of our founder, Sister Catherine McAuley, “The simplest and most practical lesson I know is to resolve to be good today, but better tomorrow.” Until next time!

President: Kay Takes
Marketing Staff: Holly Brimeyer, Matthew J. Daughenbaugh, Jennifer Faley, Keri Gockel and Natalie Reittinger
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Healthy HOLIDAY EATING

Fend off holiday weight gain with these tips.

» Eat a **light snack** before heading to the party.

» Bring a **healthy dish** to share.

» Enjoy the foods you love but in moderation. **And if you don’t love it, skip it.**

» Eat until you’re **satisfied**, not stuffed.

» Move your focus from the food to the people you’re with. **Enjoy conversations and holiday spirit.**

» Don’t settle on the couch after a full meal. **Get the whole family moving** by heading outside for a walk.

» If you overeat at one meal, go light on the next. And definitely **get back to your regular healthy eating** and exercise the next day.
I don’t have a magic number, and they don’t give you a magic number. It’s about how I feel and where I want to be in my clothes.”
—Stasia Brannon

Stasia Brannon never had to worry about her weight when growing up. If anything, she was underweight. But when it was discovered in her late 20s that she had Crohn’s disease, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease that affects the lining of the digestive tract, the subsequent treatment resulted in a 60-pound weight gain.

Her increasing weight became a low priority compared to raising her children and running a successful business.

“I got to the other side of 40 and thought, with all the health problems I’ve had and my family has had, I better do this now because it’s not going to get any easier. It was time.”

Stasia knew about the Mercy Weight Loss Program and liked that it was based on science, not gimmicks. She signed up for the program in May 2014.

“The goal of the Mercy Weight Loss Program is to provide all the tools for long-term weight loss success,” says Mercy clinical dietitian Holly Paulsen, RD, LD. “We combine the science of weight loss with real life strategies for improving eating habits and conquering the typical barriers that people tend to experience along the way.”

As part of the program, participants have their metabolic rate measured to determine exactly how many daily calories each person needs to lose weight.

Stasia began implementing the information Holly provided, making gradual changes for an easier transition. Knowing how much she should consume each day, she began tracking her calories.

“It’s calories in versus calories out, and it doesn’t get any easier than that,” says Stasia.

She was surprised, though, when she learned the
calories of some of her favorite foods, including the kung pao chicken she usually ordered. She thought it was a good choice since it’s filled with chicken and vegetables.

“I finished eating and looked up the calories—2,200 calories. It’s worse than fried fish and fries. I never looked at the calories before. I had no idea what I was putting into my body. There’s no excuse now to not know what you’re eating because you can look it up. Smart phones have made it really easy. There’s nothing you can’t find the calories for. Nothing. There’s just no excuse.”

“I love Stasia’s positive attitude toward weight loss,” says Holly. “She has kept herself focused on her goals and made it happen. She truly embraced what we aim to teach, that lasting weight loss happens when we eat fewer calories while continuing to enjoy our favorite foods without feeling overly deprived.”

Since beginning the program, Stasia has lost 50 pounds.

“The goal of the Mercy Weight Loss Program is to provide all the tools for long-term weight loss success.”

— Holly Paulsen, RD, LD

MERCY WEIGHT LOSS PROGRAM

If you have been struggling to lose weight and are looking for a new approach to long term weight loss, register for this innovative and comprehensive 12 week weight loss program. Learn the foundation of basic nutrition and how to create simple, flavorful dishes to reach and maintain your new healthy lifestyle.

Thursdays, January 28 – April 14
Mercy, 250 Mercy Drive, Dubuque
Fee: $249. Registration is required at mercydubuque.com/weight-loss or at 563-589-9600.
**Q&A**

**Q:** I've always heard incontinence is a normal part of aging, is that true?

**A:** Urinary incontinence is described as involuntary leakage of urine. It is not an inevitable part of aging. There are two main types of urinary incontinence: stress and urge.

Stress incontinence is the leakage of urine when coughing, sneezing, laughing, lifting, jogging, or doing any activity that increases pressure in the abdomen. Stress incontinence can be treated with the use of biofeedback for strengthening of the muscles that support the bladder and education on diet and fluid intake. Urge incontinence is the leakage of urine with a strong desire to urinate and usually results in frequent urination. Urge incontinence can be treated with the use of biofeedback to learn to relax the muscles that support the bladder, education on quieting of the nervous system and changing fluid intake.

The good news is almost everyone can improve their situation and many can be cured with physical therapy and the use of biofeedback. In order to be evaluated and treated with biofeedback for urinary incontinence, speak with your doctor about a referral to physical therapy.

Anne Kruse, DPT, Cert MDT

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**OPEN ENROLLMENT GOING ON NOW**

According to the Affordable Care Act, everyone who legally lives in the United States must have health insurance. For millions of uninsured people, this law gives access to health care plans at different cost levels. You may compare plans at the Health Insurance Marketplace, also known as an exchange. This one-stop shop allows you to choose a plan that fits your budget and coverage needs.

If you do not have health insurance, you must sign up for 2016 coverage during open enrollment, from now until January 31, 2016. You can shop for plans by phone, through a broker or at the online marketplace, where you can compare benefits and costs easily. Those who do not sign up will face tax penalties.

Certified enrollment counselors from Crescent Community Health Center Counselors will hold regular office hours at Crescent Community Health Center to help the public sign up for health insurance. Please call 563-552-8080 to schedule an appointment.

Visit mercydubuque.com/aca for additional information.

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**MERCY GIFT SHOP**

Shop gifts and home decor at the Mercy Gift Shop. All proceeds support programs and services for children in Mercy's care. As always, there is no sales tax.

Monday, Thursday, and Friday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Who will be this year’s celebrity guest?

Find out on Facebook Monday, December 14. Registration will open then, too.

CROCK POT CHICKEN AND WILD RICE SOUP

MAKES 5 SERVINGS • SERVING SIZE: 1 CUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound chicken breasts (do not use frozen), cut in half if large
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- ¼ teaspoon dried sage
- ½ teaspoon salt-free garlic and herb seasoning
- 1 large or 2 small bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons margarine (trans-fat free)
- 3 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 3 cups unsalted chicken stock
- ¾ cup wild rice-brown rice blend

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add all ingredients into a 6-quart crock pot.
2. Cook on low for 4 – 6 hours or until chicken breasts are cooked through and rice is done.
3. Shred chicken then stir back into soup and serve. The soup will thicken as it cools.
More families choose Mercy to deliver their babies.

Find out why at mercy-baby.com

CROCK POT CHICKEN AND WILD RICE SOUP

With the holiday season fast approaching and the weather getting cooler, a classic comfort food like chicken soup is sure to warm the soul. This soup has all of the essentials — wild rice to give the soup hearty thickness along with added fiber, as well as an abundance of vegetables and herbs to deliver a flavor punch without excessive calories.”

— Stacy Barton, RD, LD

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:
275 calories, 3.4g fat, 0.8g saturated fat, 432mg sodium, 26g carbohydrates, 3g fiber, 26g protein