



# "march wellness"

BY LEE LEWIS HUSK

## New Health and Wellness Center,

## Offers Innovation, Integration

A whole new concept in health and wellness promotion is springing up at OHSU. A new center called "march wellness" – that's small "m," small "w" – is being constructed on the university's south waterfront campus. Scheduled to open in January of 2007, march wellness is fundamentally different from anything else in the West, maybe even in the United States, say the people in the School of Nursing who lead and manage this center.

For starters, march wellness is all about personal growth and the practice of self reflection. It pays attention to the physical, emotional, social, mental, and financial and spiritual needs of the individual. It's a fitness center that includes a gym, basketball court, lap pool, cardio fitness equipment, strength training equipment and a place to meditate and practice yoga. It's a treatment center with hydrotherapy, physical therapy, personal trainers and nurse coaches. It's a learning laboratory where researchers will explore better ways to foster health. It's also a classroom where students can go to study the science of wellness and members can learn about living well through proper nutrition and physical activity.

And imagine all this connecting to a premiere, academic health center, with the full power of the most advanced care available anywhere in Oregon. Wellness and illness support will exist on a continuum, with individuals moving seamlessly among providers of acute and chronic care services to personal health counseling and nurse coaching.

Among the fundamental beliefs that underlie march wellness is that people can change for the better. "We care about personal growth and self-reflective practice," says

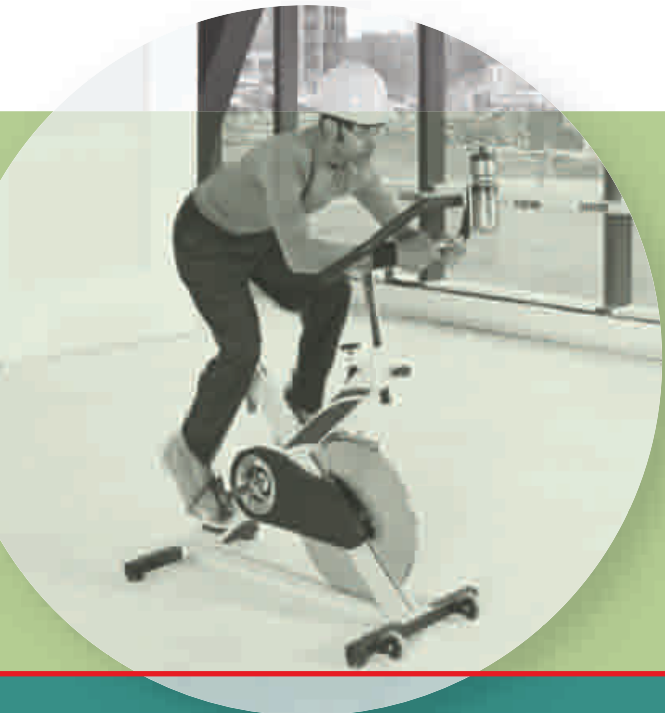
Marna Flaherty-Robb, MS, RN, associate dean for practice development and integration. Because many of today's chronic health conditions are caused, in part, by people's chosen lifestyle behaviors, the center will work with members to understand where they are, uncover their values and goals, and assist in guiding approaches to mitigate, delay or even prevent such conditions. "We can help people understand where they may be stuck and how they can make new choices," she states. "This center is interested in the sciences of understanding, relationship, health and behavior change."

In the past decade, OHSU's nursing school has amassed an impressive record of expertise and scientific discovery in wellness and health promotion, lifestyle and health behavior change, and the management of chronic illness. "We think nursing is in the best position of the health professions to address the health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century," says William Gaynor, MPA, associate dean for administration. "We offer evidence-based consultation and medically supervised 'health behavior prescriptions,'" he says. "March wellness should be a good fit with baby boomers who want to stay healthy and who may need a little support managing injuries and chronic health conditions that sometimes arise in the later decades of life."

Specifically, march wellness will offer health improvement classes; problem-solving programs such as smoking cessation, weight loss, stress management and living with such chronic conditions as arthritis and diabetes; fitness classes such as aerobic exercise, strength training, water aerobics, tai chi, yoga, and spinning; one-on-one consulting; organized team activities, such as masters swimming

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and basketball leagues; new skill classes, such as marathon training; and comfort services, such as massage therapy and medically recommended skin care.

March wellness will occupy the first two floors of a new 16-story building called the Center for Health & Healing on the OHSU Commons at South Waterfront. It is the first of several facilities scheduled for the university's innovative development along the Willamette River. The Center for Health & Healing will contain outpatient medical, surgical and imaging services; biomedical research; and the march wellness. A new aerial tram will link the building to OHSU hospitals and clinics on Marquam Hill.

The center will soon offer membership to OHSU employees and students, corporate clients and people living in adjacent neighborhoods. Its newly hired executive director, Amber Barrett Webster, MS, started work in July.

The school chose the name "march" to signify springtime and new beginnings, and also to indicate forward motion. The center's promotional materials trumpet "wellness is a journey we call march. It is a new approach to health, where the emphasis is not on looking good but on *feeling good* and *feeling good about yourself*. . . it's not about a beautiful body, it's about a *beautiful life*."



## Health Management Services

BY LEE LEWIS HUSK

If you're a university with access to the latest scientific information, how do you translate that knowledge into practice? If you're OHSU's School of Nursing, you create an entity to implement evidence-based interventions to enhance the health of employees and health plan members. The school created that entity, OHSU Health Management Services, in 2000. Since then, it has facilitated health promotion for such clients as Hoffman Construction, Oregon Department of Transportation, Portland General Electric, OHSU employees, as well as other local, regional and national clients.

"After a needs assessment, we work with an organization to implement a targeted communications program around health promotion. Then we identify people at risk through a health risk assessment and biometric screenings," says HMS Director Susan Butterworth, PhD, associate professor. "Next, we stratify those individuals by risk criteria and implement in-

terventions appropriate for their risk level." HMS specializes in telephonic health coaching and training activities based on motivational interviewing.

One satisfied customer is Vi Von Allmen, an employee at Columbia River PUD, who discovered multiple risk factors after going through an HMS health screening. She enrolled in the health coaching service and comments: "My health coach has provided me assistance in so many different areas and I have been able to make real progress. I appreciate her enthusiasm and support in setting goals and reaching them to improve my health."

"We help people explore their ambivalence around change, build motivation and confidence, and instill self-care competencies that enable them to reduce risks, manage current chronic conditions or avoid future ones," Butterworth concludes.

For more information about HMS, visit [www.ohsu.edu/hms](http://www.ohsu.edu/hms).