

Dietitian focusing on diabetes and education

By Sharon Corcoran

The Goodland Star-News

Some of Sarah Linton's job may seem elementary — reading food labels, eating right and portion control — but diabetes statistics show that many people don't get it.

A registered and licensed dietitian, Linton was determined to come home, and that has provided Goodland Regional Medical Center and the Goodland Family Health Clinic a resource to help diabetics manage their disease for healthier living. She also can educate younger patients to prevent unhealthy habits in the first place and help people who think they don't have diabetes to know whether they are at risk or not.

Linton, the daughter of Marty and Kathy Melia and a Goodland High

School graduate, said she earned degrees in dietetics, human nutrition and kinesiology at Kansas State University, then had a one-year dietetic internship in Colorado Springs and another year in Cañon City, Colo.

She and her husband Trevor, a Glen Elder native, wanted to stop visiting Kansas and return here to live. But they were afraid their career choices would prevent that.

"I could just get a job and move here," Sarah said, "but I thought it would be nice to use my education."

But then everything fell into place. Sarah said she contacted the Goodland hospital and said she would be interested in moving here. The hospital had done without a dietitian for two years, and officials jumped at the chance to help Linton

return.

She began working at the hospital Sept. 1, and her husband is an assistant vice president for investing at First National Bank. Sarah said she is working toward certification as a diabetes educator. She needs to be in her field two years and have at least 1,000 hours educating others in order to take the test.

She is already logging many of those hours at the Goodland hospital and clinic. Among her duties will be updating the hospital's menus. The staff is excited about that, she said; they've been eating the same things over and over. Doctors have a lot of patients who need diabetic education, Linton said, and haven't had anyone to refer them to in-house. There was just a consulting dietitian, she said.

Linton has an office in the clinic and will provide outpatient services, education and community

services. She encourages healthy eating, portion control and exercise, and she plans to reach out to the community with those lessons.

The dietitian said she has already done a presentation to fourth-grade students at Central Elementary School, and she hopes to get more calls for that.

"I'm excited to provide education on nutrition and exercise for children," she said. "It's a critical time in their lives; it's important for their families to work with them."

The national increase in obesity in children shows how vital that is, Linton said. People are living more sedentary lives now, she said, and that goes for children, too.

Adults use the remote control rather than getting up to change the channel, she said, and have garage door openers and other modern conveniences that save them some effort. But, she said, that also means

they're using fewer calories.

And children, she said, instead of running around outdoors, watch television, play video games and spend time on the computer.

Everybody who gets diabetes usually has a genetic predisposition, Linton said, but lifestyle factors affect it.

Obesity is responsible for 50 percent of new cases of diabetes in children, she said, and diabetes cases in children have tripled in recent years.

Linton said she is hoping to offer cooking classes for healthy and quick meals and grocery store tours to teach about healthier choices and menu planning. Those services are offered in cities, she said, and she hopes people here will be receptive.

She said diabetes prevention and management will be her main focus. The hospital hasn't had someone who specializes in that, Linton

said, and it has been hard for the doctors to follow up and help patients prevent complications down the road.

Diabetes is largely a self-management disease, Linton said; people are responsible for taking insulin if it's prescribed, are responsible for how they eat and are responsible for exercising. To do that, she said, they need education and encouragement.

Linton said she has had a lot of questions about weight management. There are a lot of fad diets, she said, but the only thing proven to work is a healthy lifestyle. People have to control their portion sizes, she said, and stay away from fried foods, desserts heavy on the sugar and soda.

More than that, she said, people need to change their mindset from diet to a healthy lifestyle.



Dietitian Sarah Linton picked up a box of cereal to show how she teaches patients at the Goodland Family Health Center to read the nutrition information on labels. Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

Grants may help with education

Goodland Regional Medical Center and the Goodland Family Health Center are hoping to have money from grants to help expand their diabetes education program.

The hospital has applied for a grant through the Kansas Health Foundation, said dietitian Sarah Linton, and if it gets the money, plans to buy a series of videos to check out to patients to help them learn about different aspects of dealing with diabetes and glucometers to measure blood sugar.

Diabetes is a self-management disease, Linton said; it's up to the patient to do what's needed to change his lifestyle. The videos would be a home guide covering every aspect of diabetes, she said.

Subjects on the videos include foot care, she said, diet, medication, stress management and exercise. Diabetes complications are preventable, Linton said; patients simply need to learn what to change and

do it.

The hardest part of being a dietitian, she said, is helping patients who don't want the help.

"I respect their wishes and choices," Linton said, "but I know they're going to be suffering."

Linton said she would also like to buy glucometers that will be available to patients who need them. Patients have to pay for them out of their pocket if they don't have good insurance, she said, and they can be expensive.

Besides the videos and glucometers, Linton said she wants to get money to use for teaching in the schools.

There is grant money available, she said; it's just a matter of figuring out how the programs work. The dietitian said she has a lot to learn about grants and how to get them, but she had help from Penny Nemechek, community grant writer, in applying for the health foundation grant.

corrections

The Goodland Star-News will correct any mistake or misunderstanding in a news story.

Please call our office at (785) 899-2338 to report errors. We believe that news should be fair and

factual.

We want to keep an accurate record and appreciate you calling to our attention any failure to live up to this standard.

People unaware of diabetes' cost

The American Diabetes Association is trying to make people more aware of the costs of diabetes during National Diabetes Month in November.

The total annual economic cost of diabetes in 2002 was estimated at \$132 billion, the association says at its web site, www.diabetes.org.

Direct medical expenditures totaled \$92 billion, the site says, \$23.2 billion for diabetes care, \$24.6 billion for chronic diabetes-related complications and \$44.1 billion for excess prevalence of general medical conditions.

Indirect costs resulting from lost workdays, restricted activity days, mortality and permanent disability due to diabetes totaled \$40.8 billion.

The \$92 billion in direct medical expenditures in 2002 compares to \$44 billion in 1997 and represents 19 percent of total personal health care expenditures in the United States, although diagnosed diabetes patients account for only 4.2 percent of the United States population.

Diabetes-related hospitalizations totaled 16.9 million days in 2002.

Cardiovascular disease is the most costly complication of diabetes, accounting for more than \$17.6 billion of the \$92 billion annual direct medical costs for 2002.

Over 65 percent of people with diabetes die from heart disease or stroke. Adults with diabetes are two

Who's at risk for diabetes?

November is National Diabetes Month, and the American Diabetes Association wants people to know more about the disease.

The association has a test to measure the risk of having or developing diabetes. The group warns that people can have diabetes for years without knowing it, and that during that time, a person's eyes, nerves and kidneys may be damaged.

Your risk for diabetes goes up as you get older, the association's test says, gain too much weight or if you do not stay active.

Having high blood pressure (above 130/80), having a family history of diabetes or having diabetes during pregnancy or having a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth are risk factors.

To find out if you are at risk, the association says to answer the following questions. Write in the points next to each statement that is true for you. If a statement is not true, put a zero, then add your score.

• I am a woman who has had a baby weighing more than nine pounds at birth. Yes, 1. _____

See RISK, Page 7

body's failure to produce insulin, the hormone that "unlocks" the cells of the body, allowing glucose to enter and fuel them.

It is estimated that 5-10 percent of Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 1.

Type 2 diabetes results from insulin resistance, a condition in which the body fails to properly use insulin, combined with relative insulin deficiency. Most Americans who are diagnosed with diabetes have type 2.

Gestational diabetes affects about 4 percent of all pregnant women, about 135,000 cases in the United States each year.

Pre-diabetes is a condition that occurs when a person's blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes.

There are 41 million Americans who have pre-diabetes, in addition to the 18.2 million with diabetes.

diabetes.

The major types of diabetes are Type 1, Type 2, gestational and pre-diabetes. Type 1 results from the

Annual Meeting and update

on Sherman County Economic Development

Public Invited

Tuesday, October 19, 5:30 p.m.

Elks Lodge North Side

I see numerous good things in the future of the entire 121st district and look forward to your continuing help and encouragement to create more opportunities for all of us!



Please vote to reelect me on Nov. 2nd!

RE-ELECT
JIM MORRISON

Paid by the Committee to re-elect Jim Morrison, William V. Adams, Treasurer.

I would appreciate your vote for Sherman County Sheriff on Nov. 2nd

"As a lifelong resident, I'm committed to providing the highest quality service to the citizens of my county.

With a proven track record in business and law enforcement, my experience speaks for itself"

Kevin L. Butts
Sherman County Sheriff

www.kevinbutts.itgo.com

Paid for by the committee to elect Kevin L. Butts for Sheriff, Sid Unruh, Treasurer

New Listings



1520 Broadway... Take a look at this freshly remodeled home and you'll be ready to move in right away! Offering over 2000 sq. ft. with 5 bedrooms, 2 baths and full basement. Has new paint, carpet, linoleum and light fixtures throughout. Kitchen has new countertops,

stainless steel double sink and faucets. There are many more features too numerous to mention, give Cynthia a call for more information or visit my website for additional pictures at www.cynthiabutts.com.



217 West 7th Street... Looking for an attractive, low maintenance home? This is it... mint condition home with 2 bedrooms, bath, eat-in kitchen, large laundry room and living room with new carpet and paint. You'll find a double detached garage and storage shed situated in a small, but well maintained yard. Priced at 45,000. Contact Cynthia for your showing.



207 Kansas... This 3 bedroom 2 bath modular is priced at only \$33,900 and offers over 1800 sq. ft. of living space. You'll find large rooms throughout including master bedroom with remodeled bathroom boasting a garden tub. Includes central air, large corner lot and oversized double garage. Let Cynthia show you this home today!

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