

LIVE LONGER – IT'S UP TO YOU

Carillon Executive Health

By Aaron R. Fodiman



St. Anthony's Health Care in St. Petersburg now offers the Executive Health program in its Carillon Outpatient Center.

KNOW MY LIFESTYLE IS NOT conducive to good health. When I was young, I considered good health to be an entitlement. As I grow older, I have gradually come to the realization that had I known I was going to live this long, I would have taken better care of myself. I have an excellent cardiologist, a great internist, a podiatrist, an eye doctor and several other medical specialists who try to keep me up and running (not literally).

One day, Ford Kyes, a good friend and the president of St. Anthony's Health Care, told me about a new Executive Health program that was being offered at its new Carillon Outpatient Center. It efficiently provides comprehensive executive physical and lifestyle evaluation that can be completed in one day. One appointment gives you 50 baseline assessments, which would normally require a multitude of appointments in traditional medical

settings. The evaluation provides you with an in-depth, state-of-the-art assessment of your health, along with a realistic action plan to help you reduce your risk for a variety of diseases. This plan is also designed to empower you towards optimal health through positive lifestyle changes. I looked at Ford and asked, "And, what did they tell you?" This was my subtle way of saying, "You go first." He then told me that he had already completed

the program, and that they did identify some opportunities for improvement. He now felt much more knowledgeable about some of the lifestyle changes he needed to make in order to see real improvement. With that being said, my bluff was called, and I asked Ford to have someone call me.

The next day, Glenda Fahey was on the phone setting up my appointment. As the evaluation takes an entire day, we picked a date about three weeks away. Next, I received a package in the mail. It included a confirmation of my appointment with an outline of my day at Carillon, directions of how to get there, a Coronary Risk Profile to be completed and returned, some consent and authorization forms, a fitness evaluation and exercise prescription questionnaire, an optimal health questionnaire and a three-day food diary that was to be completed before my appointment. I was afraid that if I told the truth about my eating and exercise habits, they would not think it was worth the trouble to see me, as they would obviously see that "good health" was not in my vocabulary.

On my appointment day, I arrived in my pristine running shoes, as instructed, and was met at the front desk by Glenda. She took me to a well-equipped room, which was to be my office for the day. It had a television, a lounge chair, a desk, a phone, note paper and a pen, and a small refrigerator that was fully stocked with an assortment of drinks and snacks. I changed into the shorts and t-shirt they provided and began my rounds of testing. After they took some blood samples, I was given a selection of breakfast items to enjoy before I was taken for a heart scan, an exercise tolerance test, fitness testing and cognitive tests. Following the tests, the cafe at the center provided me with a lunch of my choice before I continued on with hearing and vision screenings and a pulmonary function test.

The rest of the afternoon was spent with Dr. Steven Masley, the medical director of the program, who was formerly the medical director at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Aventura, Florida. As a clinical researcher for

diabetic and cardiac rehabilitation, Dr. Masley became active in longevity and cardiovascular disease research. He was appointed principal investigator for studies sponsored by the American Heart Association at Morton Plant Hospital with the Florida Geriatric Research Program. One of the largest long-term studies on geriatric groups in the country, the program was started by Dr. William Hale years ago in Dunedin.



Medical Director, Dr. Steven Masley

Dr. Masley has a passion for empowering people to achieve optimal health through lifestyle changes. I knew I would be a worthy opponent for him. As he sat and discussed my health problems with me and the ways I could improve my lifestyle, I noticed my resistance wearing down. He started to make sense to me, and I understood what he was trying to tell me. He seemed to know what he was talking about and, obviously, practiced what he preached. I began to feel guilty about what I had been doing to sabotage my own health. We discussed my cholesterol, metabolic panel, urinalysis, breathing, treadmill stress test, resting ECG, skin cancer propensity, loss of hearing, and death-wish eating habits, not to mention my dedication to a sedentary lifestyle.

All of this led to Dr. Masley helping me to develop an action plan that I thought I could follow. My health goals are relatively simple: I must get into physical shape by exercising and lose a lot of weight, as both of these goals will dramatically affect my good health probabilities.

The next week, I received a full report, which included all of my test results, the goals that we had established and my action plan. A copy was also sent to my primary physician, Dr. Sanford Plevin, who had been pleading with me to do the same thing for years. My wife, Margaret, read each page and has become my coach for following the plan. I'm eating better, or at least more nutritionally, and I'm even becoming well acquainted with our treadmill several times a week.

Am I feeling better? Strange that you should ask, but yes, I am. Has it been easy? No! Will I continue to improve upon my choice of foods and exercise the way that I should? I think so. In fact, I hope so, since my life depends on it.

So, if you see me, please don't offer me chocolate, as there are still some things I have trouble refusing. I don't know if I can really improve my health, but I can assure you that I'm going to work on it. And, thanks to Dr. Masley, who is always available to me by telephone for guidance, I believe I'll be healthier and around a lot longer than I would have been if I hadn't taken Ford's suggestion. Thanks, Ford. I owe you a lot.

EDITOR'S NOTE: You can contact Carillon Executive Health for your own assessment at (727) 561-2424.