

**CONTACT:**

Andy Gankoski, Director, Public Relations/Marketing  
330.489.1212 andy.gankoski@csauh.com

## **Fitness Program Improves Quality of Life for Local Diabetics**

### ***Local woman finds key to significant weight loss, greater independence***

When Jane Jenkins began a fitness program at the Mercy Health Fitness Center in North Canton a year and a half ago she was living a very different lifestyle. A Type I diabetic, she required five insulin shots each day and still endured the erratic high and low swings in her blood sugar that were, at times, dangerously debilitating. After finding herself in a car accident during a low swing, Jenkins decided something needed to change.

“Fortunately, the car accident was not as bad as it could’ve been, but it was a wake up call that I had to find a better way to manage my diabetes,” said Jenkins, 59, a resident of North Canton. Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin, a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches and other food into energy needed for daily life.

The better way to manage her disease turned out to be an insulin pump, a compact device that she is able to wear 24-hours-a-day that keeps her blood sugar levels stable and gives her the freedom to go about life without worrying about having another accident. But before she could be fitted and trained to use the new device, she had to make some lifestyle changes to stabilize her blood sugar levels. One of those changes involved beginning an exercise program to lose weight.

“Regular physical activity is extremely beneficial for diabetics,” said James D. Goff, DO, Medical Director of the Mercy Sports Medicine Center. “Exercise can improve the body’s response to insulin and may help or even eliminate your need for diabetes medication by lowering glucose levels.”

Dr. Goff explained that the more weight you carry, the more insulin you need to process the food you eat. By losing weight, diabetics can cut down on the amount of insulin they need to inject into their system, and often this helps their body to function better as well as to avoid high and low blood sugar swings. “A regular exercise program can improve blood sugars, decrease the risk of heart disease and help you lose weight,” he said.

One year after beginning an exercise program at the Mercy Health Fitness Center, Jenkins lost 30 pounds and has greatly reduced the amount of insulin she needs. The equivalent of one insulin shot from the pump will now last her longer than three days. Previously, she required 15 shots over the same time period.

“The exercise program at Mercy helped me to feel better about myself,” said Jenkins. “I can now

***(MORE)***

## ***Mercy Health Fitness Center/2***

manage my diabetes more effectively and live my life more fully. Plus, I lost three dress sizes! I gave those old clothes away, and I'm never going back." she said. Jenkins hopes to continue shedding the pounds through a workout schedule that includes an hour of cardio exercises and weight training three times a week.

### **Mercy Health Fitness Center caters to needs of those with health considerations**

Jenkins turned to the Mercy Health Fitness Center on a referral from a friend after trying other area gyms. "It's a very comfortable place to exercise," said Jenkins. "The Mercy staff is so friendly and far superior. They set up an individual exercise program for me and monitored my progress. Plus, I knew if I had a diabetic reaction that the people there would know what to do to stabilize me."

In addition to standard exercise programs for people of all ages and fitness levels, the Mercy Health Fitness Center offers individual fitness programs for those with specific health needs. In addition to a program for diabetics, there are programs specially designed for people undergoing treatments for cancer, heart disease and weight management. The center also offers special programs for mothers-to-be and seniors.

"Our program for diabetics provides education, monitoring and exercises for individuals attempting to manage diabetes and still maintain an active lifestyle," said Dave Faur, Program Coordinator, Mercy Health Fitness Center. "Fortunately, we have been able to help many people with medical issues like Jane. With the proper attention and guidance, these individuals progress well through the fitness program and have become more medically independent."

Through Mercy's Diabetic Exercise Program, an individual's exercise program is designed around information provided by their physician. Glucose levels are monitored and documented and individuals can receive nutritional education from a registered dietician. The effectiveness of the program is assessed regularly to ensure the individual is progressing toward his or her fitness goals. Currently, more than 80 area diabetics take part in Mercy fitness programs.

"At Mercy, I'm able to monitor my blood sugar levels before and after I work-out, which gives me greater peace of mind," Jenkins said.

"Other workout facilities may not even pay attention to the fact that a person has diabetes," said Faur. "At Mercy, members truly get individual attention to help them achieve their goals."

"The Mercy staff provided me with an exercise regimen that has achieved what I expected. I've since referred three friends that have joined me here," Jenkins said.

For more information about the Mercy Health Fitness Center at North Canton, call 330-966-8997.

Mercy Medical Center, along with the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine Health System and University Hospitals Health System, operates a 476-bed hospital serving Stark, Carroll, Wayne, Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties and parts of Southeastern Ohio. It has 550 physicians on its Medical Staff and employs 2,600 people. Mercy operates outpatient health centers in Carrollton, Dover, Jackson Township, Louisville and North Canton. A faith-based, Catholic hospital, Mercy Medical Center upholds the mission and philosophy of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine and continues to be responsive to the needs of the community, including the provision of care to all, regardless of their ability to pay. For more information, see [www.cantonmercy.com](http://www.cantonmercy.com).