

Weight Watchers® Comes to TSPMG

—A Permanente Physician's Personal Testimony

By Laura Kale, MD

This photograph was taken at a Weight Watchers® “Mega Meeting” in January 2003. As a member of Weight Watchers® with a 77-pound success story, I was privileged to take part in this photo-op with Sarah Ferguson. Since then, The Southeast Permanente Medical Group has formed an agreement with Weight Watchers® so that our members can participate at a reduced price. I feel I can confidently refer my patients with the knowledge that this is a multidimensional, medically sound program. Also, because many of my clinician colleagues lacked basic knowledge on weight loss, I arranged with our CME Department to have a Weight Watchers® leader present the basics of the program in our medical offices as a one-hour “Lunch and Learn.”

Many patients in my OB/GYN practice ask me for help with weight loss, and there are others with whom I must broach the subject. From my own life experiences, patient counseling, and extensive reading, I have come to realize that weight control is a complex medical problem and that appropriate patient education is not easy. It is tempting to say “eat less and exercise more” when asked for advice, especially with the pressure of large patient loads. Many patients and



Laura Kale, MD, and Sarah Ferguson at Weight Watchers® “Mega Meeting.”

physicians have surprisingly little knowledge about nutrition. Few have a clear perspective of proper portion size. Exercise, for many, consists of “... a very physical job.” With young families, full-time jobs, and the stresses of day-to-day living, it is easy to rely on high-fat, high-calorie prepared and fast foods for meals. Factor in any psychosocial problems, and the complexities of diet and maintaining a healthy weight are magnified.

Weight Watchers® addresses many of these issues through sound nutritional advice, trained weight-loss

counselors, encouragement of regular exercise, behavioral modification techniques and the free maintenance program to address the even more difficult process of maintaining weight loss.

If we are going to make any headway in our battle against obesity and the resulting chronic medical conditions, we must have many different options for our patients. I have found Weight Watchers® to be a viable and cost-effective option, and I will very happily keep recommending it to my patients and will continue using it myself! ♦

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