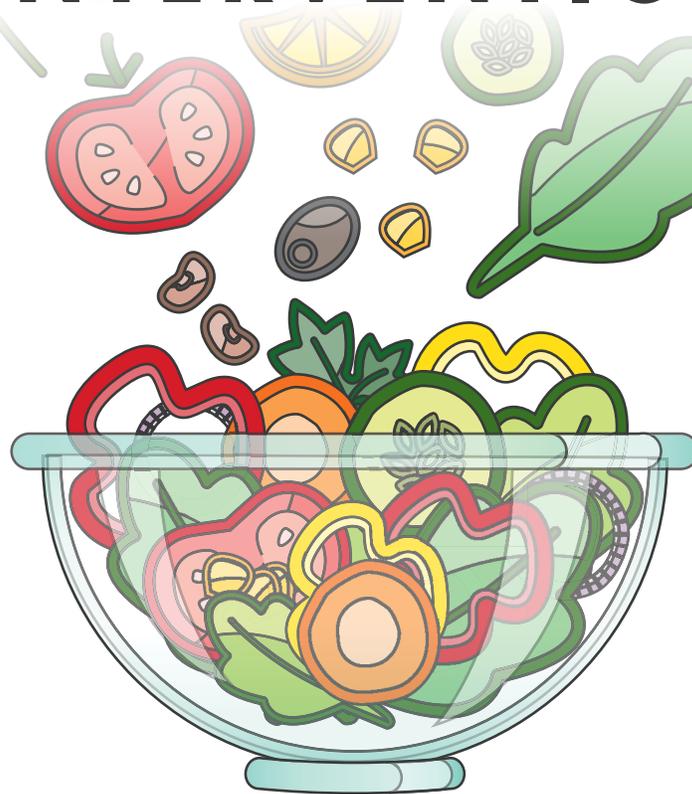


# HEALTHY EATING & WEIGHT MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION



**A CASE STUDY WITH CENTRASTATE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**



**CO-AUTHORS**

*Anthony Dissen, MA, RDN • Tracey Saliski, MA*

# HEALTHY EATING & WEIGHT MANAGEMENT INTERVENTION

A CASE STUDY WITH

**WEBSITE:**

[www.centrastate.com](http://www.centrastate.com)

**INDUSTRY:**

Healthcare - multiple sites, multiple shifts

**FT:** 1,622 **PT:** 1,029

**ABOUT CENTRASTATE**

CentraState Healthcare System is a private, not-for-profit health organization dedicated to excellence, offering the full circle of health and wellness for our community. Located in Monmouth County in central New Jersey, CentraState Healthcare System has been an integral part of the attractive, culturally diverse, and thriving community of Freehold since 1971.

CentraState's wellness initiative mission is to enhance the health and well-being of their employees through a supportive workplace and quality resources that inspire and enrich an individual's personal health and development. Their wellness vision is to empower employees and families to holistically strive for optimal individual health and wellness.

*"Since 2005, we have made a commitment to enhance the lives of our employees through our award winning Employee Wellness Program. We have developed programming that has grown to include educational offerings like our Plant Powered program, designed to offer an alternative to the standard, restrictive calorie counting nutrition program. At CentraState we strive to offer our employees innovative programming that provides support and education to make long-term positive changes."*

**JOHN T. GRIBBIN, FACHE**

*President/CEO, CentraState Healthcare System*

## THE INTERVENTION AT A GLANCE

<b>COMPANY:</b>	CentraState Healthcare System, Freehold, NJ
<b>PROGRAM NAME:</b>	Plant Powered
<b>CREATORS:</b>	Tracey Saliski, MA, Employee Wellness Manager Anthony Disen, MA, RDN & Community Health Instructor
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To help employees, their spouses and the community improve their health status and make lifestyle changes to lead to a greater quality of life.
<b>GOAL:</b>	To create lasting lifestyle changes and health improvements using an integrative approach. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Support Nutritional Changes</li><li>2. Monitor Biometric Measurements</li><li>3. Discuss Lifestyle Changes with Physician</li></ol>

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### OUTCOMES:

**Pilot Launch:** 2015 Participants - 9 Employees; 2 Spouses

- All had a waist circumference decrease; 3 participants lost 4 inches
- All saw modest decreases in blood pressure
- Average weight change per person was 9 lbs; 3 participants lost 15 lbs
- Three participants had a measurable improvement in cholesterol
- One participant decreased the need for evening insulin to manage Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus
- One participant decreased fasting blood glucose and was no longer pre-diabetic
- Five months after the program ended, most stated they maintained their knowledge and confidence in the information and continued to experience an increase in quality of life

**Programming:** 2016 Participants - 11 Employees; 25 Community Members

The program was extended to the community and similar outcomes were achieved.

## About Plant Powered

### WHY DID CENTRASTATE INITIATE PLANT POWERED?

CentraState believed that a plant based program had the ability to reverse the trend of migrating from a healthy risk state toward elevated and disease-management risk states among their employees. Instead of the health risks growing as the employees aged, they believed they could increase the health and well-being of the employees by teaching them a new way to care for themselves as supported by the literature.

### HOW DID CENTRASTATE INITIATE PLANT POWERED?

CentraState initially used Health Risk Assessment (HRA) data to target employees who have had diabetes-related health claims or were either classified as being diagnosed with diabetes (DM) or had a high risk for diabetes, pre-diabetes and those with a body mass index (BMI) greater than or equal to thirty. They worked with their population health management program provider to communicate the plant based program opportunity to selected employees through a targeted marketing campaign. It was also rolled out to all interested employees regardless of health risk. Classes were hosted on campus, and all participants worked with an RN Health Coach to monitor the blood values and anthropometric values of employees in the program. CentraState believed this program was an innovative way to approach its employees with DM. They put together a program proposal detailing what success they were expecting to see with such an intervention.



DOWNLOAD THE CENTRASTATE  
PROGRAM PROPOSAL

<https://www.welcoa.org/resources/centrastate-healthcare-system-program-proposal/>

*“In my wildest dreams, I could not imagine how taking the Plant Powered classes offered at CentraState could have changed not only my eating habits but that of my household and those close to me! It was packed with information on health, combating diseases associated with food intake, recipes, shopping ideas, websites, cooking classes where we were able to TASTE Plant Powered meals, desserts or side dishes, restaurants and camaraderie!! I would recommend this class be taken by anyone who needs to change their eating and has the willingness to embrace the wonderful options offered through this learning experience!”*

MARY ELLEN BURNS

“Plant Powered” Program Participant Fall 2015

## I. INTERVENTION: PLANT-BASED DIET

Initially the program began as a 12-week nutrition and health intervention program for employees of CentraState Healthcare System to advocate for a whole food, low-fat, plant-based diet for employees and spouses. The initial goals of the initiative were to:

- » Educate and encourage employees to consume an ad libitum diet focused on fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains with limited amounts of higher fat plant foods (nuts, seeds and avocados)
- » Greatly reduce or eliminate the intake of animal based foods for the duration of the program
- » Greatly reduce or eliminate the intake of refined oils and fats
- » Greatly reduce or eliminate the intake of processed and refined foods rich in refined carbohydrates, fats and sodium
- » Educate on healthiest animal products to include if desired

### Key Program Points



### A. Structure: 12 weeks of 90-minute weekly meetings

All classes started with a check-in on triumphs and a discussion about challenges. Educational presentations or cooking demonstrations followed. Weekly emails provided group support and included recipes, websites and restaurant recommendations.



## B. Participant Goals

Participants in the program stated that they wanted to lose weight, fight family history, decrease inflammation, reduce personal health risk factors, and be done battling the scale and food.

## C. Cost: \$150 for 12 weeks (\$12.50 per session)

CentraState offered a 50% reimbursement for successful completion by employee participants. Qualifications for reimbursement were to attend 10 out of the 12 classes and agree to biometric measurements with an RN Health Coach taken at the beginning, middle and end of the program.

## D. Organization Financial Investment: \$1,500

## E. Communication Considerations

To communicate the program, CentraState used flyers, electronic board, Employee Portal, email, health fair, information sessions, etc. A sample flyer can be seen on page 5.



## II. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

The program was considered a success for the organization and the participants. In the first offering to eleven people, all participants decreased their waist circumference with three of the participants decreasing by four or more inches. Participants lost an average of nine pounds, with three participants losing fifteen pounds. One participant who was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus came off her nightly injections with physician guidance. One pre-diabetic participant saw her fasting blood glucose go from 116 mg/dL to 90 mg/dL. Most saw decreases in their blood pressure. Cholesterol wasn't measured through the program's biometric screening, however, improvements were measured through the Employee Wellness Program annual health screenings. In a five month follow up, the participants reported continuing to use the knowledge and information from the class to make their daily choices. In testimony, participants reported that their quality of life improved due to lower inflammation and swelling; they also had confidence to change their food shopping habits and eating habits. They now move better, have more energy and feel better about themselves. The second group experienced similar success, with decreases in waist circumference, weight loss and blood pressure. All participants reported they are now confident in their ability to make better choices and have greater awareness about how their diet can positively impact their health.

*“The Plant Powered Program has been a blessing to me in that it helped me to better understand some of the things about food and calorie density, and how very small changes can make a positive impact in a big way. While I am not a perfect or strict dieter, my personal goal was to add one small change at a time in order to gain a positive cumulative effect, and so far it has been working well for me. I see my physician about every 3-4 months for routine follow up care, and she is very pleased with my results, and so am I. It was very convenient to have had the opportunity to participate in this wonderful program right here at work. I would highly recommend it to everyone, as it was a very educational and enjoyable experience.”*

**JACKIE GOLD**

*“Plant Powered” Participant Summer 2016*

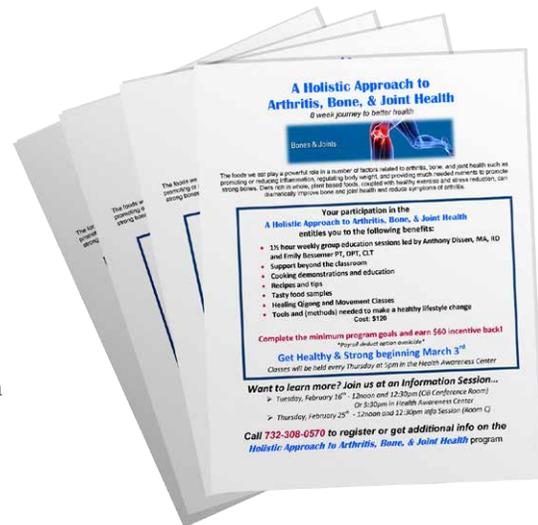
### III. FUTURE PROGRAM INSPIRATION & ENHANCEMENTS

CentraState is not done dreaming about how to improve the *Plant Powered* program in the future. Ideas include offering multiple in-class sessions, an online support group for all participants to easily connect and minimize the need to have face to face meetings. The online support group would feel like a classroom setting, with a facilitator to offer continued support, share information and news and have the participants assist one another.

In addition, as a result of the *Plant Powered* program, more programs were created.

#### A. Holistic Approach to Arthritis, Bone and Joint Health

The class included an emphasis on plant-based foods to support bone and joint health to reduce inflammation. Individuals interacting with the *Plant Powered* program and throughout the worksite were complaining about their joints hurting and being swollen. A program was created to address the inflammation and associated pain. In addition, medical claims data showed that arthritis medical related costs were high (>60%) and most of those for adults >50 years old. A physical therapist partnered with the program to discuss breathing techniques and healthy movement. The curriculum also included Qi Gong and meditation. The program won the American Heart Association Worksite Innovation Award in 2016 due to its inclusion of a cross functional teaching team, which included nutrition services, physical therapy and health promotion.



*“Plant Powered came to me at the perfect time. During the 12 weeks, I learned so much about plants, spices, and how I could create dishes that were satisfying and healthy for me. I am still following this program over two years later and feel great. It was an eye opener to learn how what we eat have such a big impact on our insides. I have always had high cholesterol and at the end of the course my total cholesterol had dropped 33 points. I also had lost 10 pounds. Even my Doctor wanted to know what I was doing! I have also taken advantage of other classes that are offered through the Employee Wellness Program at CentraState and all of them have been great. The “Holistic Approach to Arthritis, Bone, and Joint Health” class was very informative as to what spices and vegetables would help my aging joints. I now take a weekly yoga class which is something I had never done. I look forward to it every week because we stretch while strengthen and relax the body. I am grateful for all the work that has been done to prepare and hold these classes through the Employee Wellness Program, the wealth of information I have been given has made me feel better and my health has really improved.”*

#### GWEN HEIBERG

*“Plant Powered” Fall 2015, Holistic Approach to Arthritis, Bone, and Joint Health Spring 2016 Participant*

## B. Plant Powered Stars

This program is currently offered and emphasizes community support for *Plant Powered* participants through social gathering, community potlucks, sharing recipes and promoting a culture supportive to the plant based diet at work. Most of all, the program will continue to hold pot lucks where the *Plant Powered* Stars shine in bringing the most delicious food and eagerly sharing new recipes with people who have now become friends.

## C. Season It!

This is a future class idea, inspired by *Plant Powered* participants' need for recipe ideas and meal planning skills. The five-week series will involve the preparation of about four recipes each session. The themes for the weeks will be Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Snacks and Desserts. One of the weekly sessions will be spent at a local supermarket to learn how to shop for the most affordable and healthy foods based on the time of the year. CentraState plans it to offer the program four times per year to accommodate each season. 

*“The Plant Powered Program is, to me, a way to not only provide our participants with the latest in nutrition and dietary research, but even more so it is a way to begin building a community of people who can provide support and friendship to one another to help everyone achieve their personal health and wellness goals. Health can rarely be achieved in isolation, but when one is a part of a larger group of supportive people, incredible things can happen!”*



ANTHONY DISSEN, MA, RDN

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*“For Anthony and me, Plant Powered started as truly a dream idea. We knew the potential outcomes, but we had no idea if we would be given the green light to bring it to life. Luckily, our Leadership supports bringing innovative programming to our staff through our Employee Wellness Program and we have been able to see our Plant Powered program grow. There is no better feeling than seeing an Employee come into class almost floating from excitement after their mid-way biometric screening weight loss or to talk to an Employee a year later and their health has dramatically improved for the better. I feel completely privileged that Employees have trusted the Plant Powered program as a resource in making positive changes in their life.”*



TRACEY SALISKI, MA

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