

## Case History

Kent Hospital is a 359-bed, non-profit, acute care community hospital and academic medical center serving approximately 300,000 residents of central and southern Rhode Island. Children in Rhode Island are part of a nationwide obesity epidemic with over 26% classified as overweight or obese. This trend has devastating consequences, including early onset diabetes, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, and psycho-social impairment. Kent Hospital recognized this crisis by supporting the state's first grant-funded behavioral program targeting overweight children. Pam Hill, RD, LDN, Sodexo's Clinical Nutrition Manager applied for the grant funding and developed Kids Choose to be Healthy.

Since its inception in 2003, Kids Choose to Be Healthy has reached 328 children from 35 communities. The target audience is overweight children between 6-10 years old with a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 95th percentile. Each of the eight classes is 1½ hours long and is attended by children and family members. Classes are presented by two registered dietitians

### Kids Choose to be Healthy

#### Clinical Nutrition Services

and one exercise physiologist. The sessions cover a variety of topics including nutrition basics and fitness fundamentals. One of the keys to its success is the participation of not only the children but other family members, too. Participants are recruited state-wide, using advertisements, referrals from health care providers, school nurses and past participants.

Data collection has confirmed that overweight children and their families demonstrated positive behavioral health habit changes as a result of participating in this family-centered program.

Key results of intervention:

- 89% increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- 62% increase consumption of whole grains

- 49% reduced consumption of red meats
- 48% increase in child's physical activity outside of school
- 68% decrease in screen time
- 58% increase in parental physical activity
- 72% of participants demonstrated decreased BMI.

#### Client's Perspective

*"Pam Hill had the early vision and commitment to create an effective program that uses her profession to improve the health of our community. Most importantly, she has been a persistent and dedicated advocate for children to improve their lives and their futures. We are fortunate to have someone of Pam's character work at Kent Hospital."*

– Dan Callihan  
Assistant VP Support Services  
Kent Hospital

Pam and the team at Kent Hospital received the 2008 Governor's Award for Wellness Innovation given by Rhode Island Governor Donald L. Carcieri.