



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

National Association to
Advance Fat Acceptance
April 2013

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CVS Wellness Program: a Prescription for Discrimination!



by Peggy Howell

Last month NAAFA issued a press release calling on the leadership of CVS Caremark to re-evaluate their new so-called "voluntary" wellness policy. The program requires employees to release private medical information to their employer's wellness program or pay an additional \$50 per month for healthcare coverage. How can a program be called voluntary when non-compliance results in a penalty?

Our objection is not with employers offering wellness programs; it is simply with those whose wellness programs include punitive measures or differential rewards based on health status factors, including a person's cholesterol, blood pressure, weight or body mass index. Body size or weight is not a proxy for health or wellness. These programs are discriminatory practices.

But there's so much more to this story. CVS joins the ranks of cost cutting corporations such as Whole Foods, Safeway, and Boyd Gaming who are disguising an attempt to squeeze more out of employees as benefits packages and wellness programs.

Boyd Gaming introduced a similar "voluntary" wellness program three years ago. At the beginning of year two, the program became mandatory with non-compliance costing employees more than an additional \$600 per year for health insurance. Non-compliance also made employees ineligible for the company's premium coverage. Additionally, their program requires those employees with a BMI above 25 to see a Boyd employed health coach three times a year.

Boyd's annual health assessment can be provided by your personal physician or you can go to one of their assessment clinics and they will take your blood, weigh and measure you. They will assist with the 100 question health assessment form which asks for information such as height, weight, waist measurement, how often

HAES and Social Justice

[April Video of the Month](#)

NAAFA supports the principles of Health At Every Size (HAES). These principles are aligned with our mission of protecting the rights and improving the quality of life for fat people. Instead of focusing on weight as a measurement of health, the HAES approach removes weight from the equation and replaces it with a focus on overall well being, which includes the full range of body shapes and sizes.

Michelle Neyman Morris, PhD, RD from California State University, Chico, is featured in this informative video on Health At Every Size and Mindful Eating at Any Age. The video is an educational video and runs 1 hr 48 mins, so set aside some time to hear how HAES includes mindful eating and social justice aspects. It's well worth the time!

<http://rceweb.csuchico.edu/Mediasite/Viewer/?peid=f35432b082b449efb6d59a0ebed477a8>

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you exercise, how many hours per night you sleep, do you wear your seat belt, alcohol consumption, how often do you floss, etc.

and are used with permission.

So what's next? Tracking how you spend your minimum wage paycheck? Seriously, they already have the capability to do so! Check out this article:

<http://www.policymic.com/articles/33807/obesity-crisis-this-service-lets-your-boss-track-your-grocery-purchases>

Join Our Mailing List!

As representatives of some of the major stakeholders involved, members and the Board of NAAFA are requesting the re-evaluation of the intent and execution of CVS Caremark's Wellness Program. NAAFA offers its assistance in referring experts that may be of service to you in finding health-based wellness programs. To voice your objection to CVS, sign the petition at: <http://tinyurl.com/csnf7z8>

Since the announcement from CVS Caremark, Michelin North America, Inc. has announced their version of madness labeled as a wellness program. Employees at the tire maker who have high blood pressure or certain size waistlines may have to pay as much as \$1,000 more for health-care coverage starting next year. The company will reward only those workers who meet healthy standards for blood pressure, glucose, cholesterol, triglycerides and waist size - under 35 inches for women and 40 inches for men. Speak out against Michelin's policy at: <http://tinyurl.com/bm4smss>

REVOLUTIONARY THINKING

Why Don't We Accept Our Own Power To Change The World?



by Darlene Howell

I recently read a string of comments to a posting on a Facebook group that really stirred my thinking and sense of amazement.

The poster referenced an article about fat discrimination. In the article, the writer stated, "If two-thirds of us are overweight or obese then I find it hard to claim there is serious discrimination going on."

Commenters began a discussion of historical accounts of when a "majority" was discriminated against by a comparative "minority". One commenter stated, "Yeah, it's a major fallacy to assume that discrimination only applies to minorities. African/black slaves were a regional majority at the time of slavery in the US. Native Americans were a majority before European settlers killed them off. Serfs were in the majority in feudal England. Jews were in the majority in Berlin pre-holocaust. Slaves were the majority in ancient Egypt. And so on. Being in the majority doesn't make you the group in power."

I was floored at these realizations. I'm not a historian or sociologist, so I had actually never thought about it. My mind reeled at the question, "Why would a group that is in the majority not take the power of that majority to change things?"

I think the answer centers around fear. Fear of change. Fear of accepting your own power. Fear that you can't make the change you want to see made. We, especially as fat people, live in a world where we are told to hate ourselves; told we need to change ourselves to be accepted; told in many ways we are worthless. This is done by the "ruling" minority so we won't realize our own power. Thus, we are filled with fear of the idea of acceptance of our own power and worth and how we can truly make a difference if we band together. There is power in numbers. If the "majority" of people stopped listening to the messages of powerlessness being fed to us and we all banded together, just think of what we could accomplish! We could change the world!

This is revolutionary thinking. This is the type of thinking that the world needs. This is what prompts us to spread the message of Equality At Every Size.

Project Curve Appeal Announces the 2013 Curvy Icon Award

by Kim McCarter

Project Curve Appeal, a division of Pink City Corp (PCC), is a multicultural organization dedicated to promoting, empowering and educating full-figured women to celebrate their beauty and embrace their curves while living a healthy lifestyle. They are hosting the annual *For Who I Am Curve Appeal* Convention on May 3-5, 2013 at Holiday Inn Select Atlanta, 450 Capitol Ave SE, Atlanta, GA 30312.

This year's recipient of the Curvy Icon Awards is Madeline Figueroa-Jones, Editor-in-Chief of *Plus Model Magazine*.

Madeline Figueroa-Jones, a New York native, is the editor-in-chief of *Plus Model Magazine* (PMM), the #1 publication celebrating the plus size fashion and plus modeling industry. She has produced stunning editorials and issues that push the envelope, going where no other traditional fashion magazine dares to go by including edgy fashion spreads aimed at featuring the plus size modeling industry in its truest light, as well as exclusive interviews offering insight into some of today's top models and industry professionals. Under her direction, in January, 2012, PMM hit viral status for the explosive editorial, "PLUS SIZE BODIES, WHAT IS WRONG WITH THEM ANYWAY?"

The *For Who I Am Curve Appeal* Convention is designed to bring full-figured women, groups, clubs, and organizations together to unite for the ultimate experience to network, shop, enjoy fashion shows, photo shoots, and various forms of entertainment. This year's convention attendees will also participate in empowerment workshops including topics on health, proper body foundation, fashion styling, makeup application, maintaining healthy hair, and other topics that pertain to women.

Project Curve Appeal is comprised of chapters of full-figured women around the nation, who are on a mission to correct the distorted perception of curvier women around the world while empowering and educating them to celebrate their beauty, embrace and enhance their curves and live a healthy lifestyle. The first recipient of the coveted Curvy Icon Award was Chenese Lewis of Plus Model Radio. "We wanted to honor someone who genuinely takes an interest in the people and projects within the curvy community. Chenese has supported almost everyone in the community by either promoting them on her podcast, her blog, or with her presence." said Bev Wilson, founder of Project Curve Appeal. To learn more about Project Curve Appeal and all of its community events and activities, please visit <http://www.ProjectCurveAppeal.com>

Welcome to Vegas!

Things you need to know for your 2013 NAAFA Convention



Some of the Las Vegas locals have started posting tips for first time visitors to Las Vegas on our 2013 NAAFA Convention page. For those of you who aren't on Facebook, we thought these tips would be good to share with everyone. So between now and convention time expect to read new tips each month.

LAS VEGAS AIRPORT:

McCarran Airport is a good sized airport but very manageable. They don't have motorized carts but they do have a wheelchair service. When you are boarding your flight at your home airport, let them know if you need wheelchair assistance when you land. Be sure to tell them you'll need a wide chair. They will have a wheelchair and a pusher standing right at the exit from the plane.

They will push you to the baggage claim area, help you with your bags then roll you out to ground transportation and wait until you board a shuttle or taxi. There's no charge for this service but a tip is always appreciated.

The Westin does not provide a free shuttle service. Shuttles to the Strip cost about \$8.00 per person, a taxi costs about \$15.00 and limo service is approximately \$40.00 per hour.

HAILING A CAB:

In most cities you simple step off the curb and wave down a taxi, but NOT in Vegas. It's against the law for a taxi to stop in the street; it's so they can keep

traffic flowing and for safety issues. So when you want a taxi in Vegas, you just need to go to any hotel valet and they are all lined up right there waiting to take you anywhere you want to go. Also, note that there are handicapped accessible taxis that can take you and your scooter where you want at no extra cost.

I was thrilled to learn that EVERY cab company in Vegas is required by law to keep handicapped vans in their fleets.

Another difference is that all taxi cab companies charge the same price so there is no calling around for the cheapest cab like in many other cities.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Do you have mobility issues? Las Vegas is one of the most handicap friendly cities in the country. I really can't think of a single place you are not able to go to in a scooter or wheelchair. All of the casinos, shows, buses, shuttles and even some taxis are accessible.

The hotel elevator you take to go to your room is the same elevator that takes you within just a few steps of the NAAFA hospitality suite, vendor fair, workshops, ballroom, pool, casino, and food, so you may be able to get around well without a scooter; only you know what's best for your level of mobility.

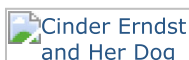
You may want to rent a scooter to go exploring the *Fremont Experience* or other places. Keep in mind you can take your scooter in the cab; the hotel valet will call an accessible cab for you. It will take a few minutes so plan for that in your schedule.

These scooter rental companies have large scooters available:
<http://www.702scooters.com> and <http://www.activemobilitylv.com>

AMBULANCE SERVICES:

While I hope it's never needed, it gives me peace of mind knowing that Las Vegas has a bariatric ambulance with a six man crew and equipment to handle larger patents. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/health/2006-03-31-obesity-ambulance_x.htm

Next Steps for Steps



by Cinder Ernst

The main function of all the exercises you have learned in the *Going Down Stairs* series is to strengthen your thigh and butt muscles. Going down stairs is really hard on your knees. Strong muscles help, but I'm a fan of going down sideways if you know that is best for you. Even if you never go straight down the stairs it will be really useful to have the strongest legs possible.

This month I'm teaching you the ***Tiny Bend***. Did I say TINY? Yes I did, and it is TINY. This is a standing exercise. To begin stand with your feet hip distance apart, weight on your heels so you can wiggle your toes. Now gently stick your butt out. That should drop your thighs a bit and create a TINY bend in your knees. As you come back up to standing upright, squeeze your butt and *Miracle Knee* both legs.

Two keys to this exercise: 1) let your knees just react to gently sticking out your butt; don't concentrate on bending them; 2) put your effort into firing the butt and thigh muscles on the way back to standing upright.

Just one *Tiny Bend* gives you a ton of strengthening value when you make it small, but concentrate on muscle recruitment. Start with one repetition.

Small Steps Rule!

As always I welcome your comments and questions. Email me at coach@cinderernst.com

Have you gotten the *Heal Your Knee Pain Starter Kit* yet? It's my gift to you. Pick up your copy at <http://lesskneepain.com>

Thanks and love,
Cinder

Wish I Had Said That!



by Peggy Howell

I hope you agree that this column has been interesting and has helped prepare us to stand up for ourselves in the face of cutting remarks from family members, co-workers, even strangers on the street. This will be the last in this series of articles. I appreciate the feedback and suggestions that have been contributed. You won't want to miss Linda Bacon's presentation at the NAAFA convention this year as she addresses developing resilience in the face of resistance.

Last Month's Comment: You have such a pretty face, if only you'd lose weight, you'd be . . . (perfect, beautiful, a knock-out, etc.)!

Suggested Responses:

- A - I am perfect as I am right now!
- A - I am pretty. You, however, are showing a great deal of ugliness.
- A - "Pretty is as pretty does" my Mama always used to say.
- A - My physical appearance is not a measure of my worth.

Has this exercise helped you add to your list of responses? Several people have remarked that they appreciate this exercise, since they never seem to know what to say when someone makes a rude, inappropriate comment out of the blue. Thank you for your participation.

REMINDER: Fat and Sexy: Five Things about Sex You Always Wanted to Know but Were Afraid to Ask*



In January, NAAFA had a successful launch of its first teleseminar with fitness expert and NAAFA newsletter columnist Cinder Ernst. The next teleseminar will feature another expert and past NAAFA workshop presenter: Virgie Tovar, MA. Virgie is a sexologist, fat activist and writer. NAAFA believes that people of all sizes have the right to a fulfilling and healthy sex life. You've probably noticed that we live in a sex-negative culture that teaches us shame about our sexuality and our bodies. If you're having a difficult time feeling sexy you are SO not alone! Join an open and revealing teleseminar:

Fat and Sexy: Five Things about Sex You Always Wanted to Know but Were Afraid to Ask*

Date: Saturday, April 20, 2013
Time: 4:00pm PDT/7:00pm EDT

In this not-to-be-missed exclusive teleseminar, Virgie Tovar, editor of *Hot & Heavy: Fierce Fat Girls on Life, Love and Fashion* (Seal Press, 2012), will spill some of her yummiest sex secrets. "Fat & Sexy" will cover requisite topics from vibrators to vulvas (and penises too!) with a focus on body positivity and fat embodiment. Come with questions, leave with answers (and maybe even some orgasms!) You won't want to miss the homework!

To register, click on: <http://tinyurl.com/cjuf9ms>

*Please note: Due to the mature nature of the subject matter, this teleseminar may not be suitable for all individuals and is not advised for individuals under the age of 18. Signing up for this teleseminar indicates that you are at least 18 years of age.

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[There's more news at <http://naafa.org>]

October 2012: A report on weight loss surgery by the UK's National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Death recommends educating both patients and healthcare professionals of the risks of WLS and the proper medical care involved

in the face of complications. The report also notes that deaths that occur more than 30 days after surgery are "seriously underestimated", a fact that those considering WLS should keep in mind.

http://www.ncepod.org.uk/2012report2/downloads/BS_fullreport.pdf

March 7, 2013: Five patients have undergone an experimental procedure that blocks an artery in the stomach, which reduces the production of one of the body's appetite stimulant hormones, ghrelin. All five patients lost weight over three months. Obviously the findings are highly preliminary, and as one expert points out "when one hormone is targeted, the body usually finds other ways to compensate."

<https://www.webmdhealth.com/nl/nlv.aspx?id=81B719BFE524970D&s=13898>

<http://content.onlinejacc.org/article.aspx?articleid=1666257>

March 16, 2013: HAES researcher Linda Bacon is interviewed by Digital Journal Reports, making the case for weight neutrality and a focus on health-enhancing behaviors such as eating nutritious foods, exercising, and listening to cues from your body.

<http://digitaljournal.com/article/345802>

March 18, 2013: Standard & Poor's rating services lowers its rating of Weight Watchers due to poor earning forecasts. Disappointingly, the earning forecasts are not linked to people realizing that Weight Watchers (like all diets) doesn't work, but rather are linked to the weak economy and strong competition.

<http://news.yahoo.com/p-downgrades-weight-watchers-poor-212749130.html>

March 20, 2013: A physician discusses her problems with using the term "obese" and "obesity" in interactions with patients, feeling that the word "conveys judgment, disdain and bias." While still believing patients need help with excess weight and "its many health complications," she tells of patients' negative reactions triggered by the term.

<http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleID=1669822>

March 21, 2013: Grist offers a great article about a plus-size fashion designer who is committed to sustainability, using upcycled, vintage or organic material sources. The article includes photos of beautiful fat models wearing some of the designs. Even more wonderfully, Grist also urges anyone planning on commenting on the article to be kind, and provides links to two size-positive blog posts.

<http://grist.org/people/lose-the-girdle-sustainable-mad-men-fashion-for-plus-sized-awesome>

March 25, 2013: More employers are jumping on the "wellness" program bandwagon, including plans that penalize employees who do not comply. This could make healthcare less affordable to those who need it most.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/26/business/companies-offer-workers-more-incentives-for-health-changes.html>

March 26, 2013: All flight crewmembers in India over the age of 40 will be required to pass medical tests (including measurement of blood pressure, blood sugar, height, weight, waist-to-hip ratio) per the order of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Female crewmembers over the age of 35 have been subject to the tests for some time, but this will be a new requirement for male flight crewmembers.

<http://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/26/shape-up-or-be-grounded-air-india-tells-40-plus-cabin-crew>

March 27, 2013: A Norwegian associate professor believes that pricing airfare based on passenger's weight would provide financial savings to the airlines and (thinner) passengers, plus "improved health benefits" to the fat passengers who lose weight. Because discrimination is wonderful! (Not really.)

<http://www.cbsatlanta.com/story/21811097/study-airlines-should-charge-fares-based-on-your-weight>

<http://www.palgrave-journals.com/rpm/journal/v12/n2/abs/rpm201247a.html>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0969699711000846>

March 28, 2013: Yet another possible way to eliminate fatness: adjust the bacteria in one's gut, according to two studies.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/28/health/studies-focus-on-gut-bacteria-in-weight-loss.html>

<http://stm.sciencemag.org/content/5/178/178ra41>

<http://jcem.endojournals.org/content/early/2013/03/22/jc.2012-3144.abstract>

April 2, 2013: Samoa Air announces it is basing its airfare on the combined weight of a passenger and the passenger's luggage, and many news outlets wonder if this is not the wave of the future. NAAFA's Peggy Howell, however, states, "Treating

people like freight is not a good alternative." [Editor's Note: tanteterri of Fatties United provides an in-depth look at Samoa Air and its unusual circumstances; see second link.]

<http://5newsonline.com/2013/04/02/airline-charges-passengers-by-the-pound>
<http://fattiesunited.wordpress.com/2013/04/08/why-samoa-air-is-welcome-to-weigh-my-fat-ass>

April 3, 2013: The headline of this Miami Herald article screams about a "new battlefield in the war against obesity". But the article itself is a well thought out piece that talks about schools providing healthier food choices as a step in educating children about nutrition and exposing them to different kinds of foods.
<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/04/02/3319442/school-lunches-the-new-battlefront.html>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

NAAFA, Inc. | P.O. Box 4662 | Foster City | CA | 94404-0662