

Health Fair Aims at Prevention

Story and photo by Lt. Cmdr. C.T. O'Neil, D7 Public Affairs Officer

MIAMI -- The Health Services Clinic at Integrated Support Command Miami recently hosted its third Causeway Island Health Fair at the Coast Guard Miami Beach Base, Miami Beach, Fla. to celebrate healthy lifestyles and preventative health care.

The fair kicked off early in the morning with a 5K fun run/walk and was followed by a blood drive, information booths from about a dozen agencies, and to really bring in the crowds, a free lunch.

Cmdr. Luis Rondon, chief of health services at the ISC Miami Clinic, coordinated the event – his third at the Miami Beach base. Armed with no budget or resources, just an overwhelming desire to help keep Coasties healthy, Rondon began looking for participants and sponsors six months before the April 18 event.



MIAMI -- Lt. j.g. Marcos Espinosa of U.S. Coast Guard Civil Engineering Unit Miami talks about healthy lifestyle choices with Melissa Ross, Integrated Support Command Miami Health Promotion Manager, during ISC Miami's Health Fair April 18. Coast Guard photograph by Lt. Cmdr. C.T. O'Neil, D7 PAO.



MIAMI -- Petty Officer 3rd Class Shawn Hamby of U.S. Coast Guard Station Miami Beach, Fla., blows into a Breath CO device as Melissa Ross, Integrated Support Command Miami Health Promotion Manager observes, during a Health Fair here April 18. Hamby came to the health fair to learn more about how to quit smoking. Ross was able to provide with information about the Mayo Clinic Tobacco Quitline and the Coast Guard's tobacco cessation services. Coast Guard photograph by C.T. O'Neil, D7 PAO.

After making countless phone calls, Rondon had gained support from representatives of Sysco, General Mills, Proctor & Gamble, UHS Sleep Laboratories, Columbia Southern University, New Horizons Computer Learning Centers and several other organizations including ISC Miami Work Life.

While this was the tenth fair Rondon had organized, he still worked to bring in new information and activities.

According to Rondon this year's event marked the first time CPR classes and certification were offered as part of the fair with the Coast Guard Auxiliary providing the instructors. Of course, with prevention being at the "heart" of the matter, free cholesterol and blood pressure screening was

also part of the day's festivities thanks to the Florida Heart Research Institute's participation.

Fair participants were also able to learn about dental health, smoking cessation programs from the Mayo Clinic, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol abuse and the latest information from TRICARE.

"The purpose of the fair is to promote wellness and health in general," said Rondon. "The fair has a prevention focus and we want to share and pass information."

Rondon said that based upon what he has seen in his 15 years with the Coast Guard the most common problems stem from diet, exercise or accidents and in his opinion, prevention is the key. "I would rather see people to help them be ready for duty, rather than for things that could have been prevented," he said.

The clinic provides services to about 2,100 people within the clinic's area of responsibility, of whom about 1,200 reside locally. With numbers like these, an argument could be made that Rondon's preventative healthcare approach is about workload, but anyone who meets him quickly understands that's not the case. "You've got to do more than just come to work – you've got to do more to take care of your people," said Rondon. "I invite other clinics and physicians to get involved and take the time because it's worth it. This is my tenth one [fair] and I have had a great time."



Health information was abundant at the U.S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command Miami Health Fair April 18 at Miami Beach, Fla. Coast Guard photograph by Lt. Cmdr. C.T. O'Neil, D7 PAO.

USCG