

Sign up for the Challenge by Monday, Jan. 27

Campus Gears Up for State of Slim Challenge

By Todd Neff

Lose more than a pound a week for sixteen weeks – and keep it off for good! Act now!

Sounds like an infomercial. But indeed, weigh-ins and sign-ups for the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center's [State of Slim Campus Challenge](#) end next Monday, Jan. 27 (see box for details). And the numbers of pounds that diligent State of Slim Challenge participants have shed has been well-documented. In a pilot program starting last fall, 12 Anschutz Medical Campus participants lost a total of 289.8 pounds – an average of 24.15 pounds each. In three months, these employees shed an average of 12.22 percent of their body weight.

Now it's your turn. For \$99 (or about \$4 per lost pound, if the average holds), University of Colorado Hospital and other Anschutz Medical Campus students and employees can join the full-on State of Slim Campus Challenge starting Jan. 27.

But that's not all!

When the program wraps up in May, Wellness Center Executive Director James Hill, PhD, Associate Director Holly Wyatt, MD, and a panel of senior campus leaders (UCH President and CEO John Harney and CU President Bruce Benson among them) will consider both participants' weight loss and essays they submit detailing their personal stories. The male and female participant with what the judges consider to be the most compelling combination will win at least \$2,500 – and as much as \$5,000, depending on participation. So the challenge extends beyond one's own waistline.

Some side bets have also emerged. UCH's Harney and Children's Hospital Colorado CEO James Shmerling each say their institution's participants will lose the greatest percentage of total body weight.

The stakes of the wager are to be determined as of press time. Wyatt says other cross-institution challenges are under discussion, too.

Food for thought. If you've dropped by the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center recently, it's been hard to miss the State of Slim T-shirts, but there is far more to the program than insignias and slogans. The program is based on nutrition, exercise and wellness science put forth in the eponymous [book](#) by Hill and Wyatt, who are considered two of the country's top nutrition and weight-loss experts (challenge participants receive a copy of the book).

Wyatt says the tome is a product of insights gleaned and lessons learned over the course of both her and Hill's careers as researchers and clinicians. At the heart of State of Slim is what they call the [Colorado Diet](#), which they describe as "a proven way to reignite,

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rebuild and reinforce your body's fat-burning engines so you can develop a 'Mile-High Metabolism.'"

"The main difference with this diet is that it begins with the end in mind," Wyatt said. "It provides the weight loss just like Atkins and all these other diets. But from the very beginning, it sets you up to get you in the best position to maintain that weight loss – metabolically, physically, and mentally."

It worked for them – it can work for you, too!

Let's get small(er). With the possible exception of [Wyatt herself](#), the folks behind State of Slim Challenge lack the celebrity cachet of health-infomercial endorsers such as Suzanne Somers (of the ThighMaster) or Jack LaLanne (Power Juicer). They have avoided enlisting Ab Rocketing, Bowflexing, or Flex Belting "users" with 3 percent body fat. But they do have pilot-program graduates such as John Hagen.

Hagen is a nurse anesthetist who puts people under general anesthesia at UCH. During the State of Slim 16-week pilot program, Hagen dropped 43.6 pounds and 10 inches from his waistline. He went from 35 percent body fat to 17 percent. He was 5'7", 233.6 pounds; now he is 5'7", 190 and shooting for 175.

"It's not just a diet program," Hagen said. "It's kind of a lifestyle-change and behavioral modification program. That's what State of Slim is all about – putting together the pieces that will cause you to have success both during the program and long-term."

Hagen described the program as half diet, half exercise. On the exercise side, he was at the Anschutz Health Wellness Center six or seven days a week for 60 to 90 minutes. He worked with a trainer to devise a plan that worked for him, in his case one that incorporated both weight and cardiovascular work.

Shed those unwanted pounds – without ever feeling hungry!

On the diet side, the keys were lean proteins and healthy fats such as those in nuts. One eats six times a day on the Colorado Diet. Hagen baked, he grilled, he steamed asparagus, he said. His favorite staple: baked pork loin with roasted vegetable medley, spiced with garlic pepper. He said he was never hungry, and sometimes skipped the sixth meal.

"You're not drinking water and eating bread and lettuce," Hagen said. "You have parameters you fall within – and there's creative cooking and spices and reinventing your palate, and preparing foods that are healthier choices."

Super-size the initiative. Hagen was watching his weight before he started the program – he's 62 pounds from his weight when he started at CU's Department of Anesthesiology on July 1, 2013 – and he's planning on continuing to lose. He and his 11 pilot-program graduates will also be helping out a bit with the State of Slim Challenge, he added. "Being the first cohort, we're kind of the State of Slim experts, if you will."

Wyatt says she anticipates about 300 participants across campus, but believes that if it goes viral, the number could be higher. A big part of the program is developing a community embracing healthy choices and exercise, which she and State of Slim Challenge leaders will support with lectures, group walks, meals and a participant-only web community, she said.

"We tend to behave like the others around us, so it's ultimately about reinforcing positive, healthy behaviors that participants can carry forward," she said.

While the Challenge isn't a research project in itself, it is a proof of concept. Wyatt said the Wellness Center would like to export the Challenge beyond the borders of our comparatively slim state.



John Hagen, a CU School of Medicine nurse anesthetist who spends his days at UCH, before and after the State of Slim Challenge's pilot program. He took 10 inches off his waistline in 16 weeks.

"The bigger idea is that this is something we're going to do other places," she said.

Don't Delay! Sign up for the State of Slim Campus Challenge

There's still time – you have until the first State of Slim Campus Challenge talk on Monday, Jan. 27 – to sign up and weigh in for the Challenge. The first three sign-ups and weigh-ins are in the lobby of the Anschutz Health and Wellness Center at the corner of Racine Street and Montview Boulevard. The last is at the State of Slim Challenge's opening talk in the Hensel Phelps Auditorium, northwest corner of Research Complex 1 on 19th Avenue.

Times:

- » Thursday, Jan. 23
6-8 a.m. Anschutz Health and Wellness Center
- » Friday, Jan. 24
6-8 a.m. Anschutz Health and Wellness Center
- » Friday, Jan. 24
4-6 p.m. Anschutz Health and Wellness Center
- » Monday, Jan. 27
4:30 p.m. Hensel Phelps Auditorium, Research Complex 1

Cost: \$99 per participant, including a copy of "State of Slim."
Must be an Anschutz Medical Campus or CU employee or student to participate. For more information, call 303-724-9030 or visit www.anschutzwellness.com/challenge