

Tuesday, November 19

Keynote: Dr. Cedric X. Bryant - The Art & Science of Effective Exercise Programming

Research has consistently shown that the health and fitness industry has been quite ineffective in getting people to adopt and maintain active lifestyles. Health and exercise professionals need to develop a better understanding of the psychology of health and fitness in order to help their clients create positive, sustainable change in their lives. In addition to designing evidence-based exercise programs (“the science”), exercise professionals must acquire the knowledge and skills to help their clients craft strategies for successful lifestyle change (“the art”).

This keynote will explore ways in which health and exercise professionals can use a client-centered approach to effectively apply evidence-based programming information to help their clients achieve their unique goals. Attendees should walk away with a better understanding and ability to provide their clients with truly personalized training programs that empower them to take ownership of their health, wellness, and fitness journeys.

Industry Insights Panel: Healthcare System Perspectives

Panelists: Ken Gorman – Power Wellness, Sean McManamy - HealthFitness, Bill McBride – Active Wellness, Don Doyle – Healthplex Associates, and David Evans, Cooper Wellness Strategies

Facilitator: Mariann Murphy, MFA Vice President

Breakout Roundtables

We have facilitators leading discussions on: Members-Recruit & Retain; Qualified Staff-Seeking & Keeping; Kickin’ Off Your Career the MFA Way; Working with Health Systems to Enhance Budget and Invest in Medical Fitness; Group Exercise; Bridging the gap between physical therapy/cardiac rehab (outpatient rehabs) and personal training; and Relatable-Sharing common experiences between different positions.

Hot Topics Panel: Professionalization Efforts in Medical Fitness

Panelists: Alan Loyd – Beacon Health & Fitness; Amy Thompson; Mike Stoops – Integrated Wellness Partners; John Caliri – FirstHealth Fitness; and Michele Wong – Active Wellness

Facilitator: Michael Stack, CEO of Applied Fitness Solutions

Wednesday, November 20

Energize Your Remote Workforce: Fostering Community Through Virtual Fitness

Ashley Onstott, Fitness Services Manager - Premise Health - Presented with Cayla Barrett & Yasmin Timm
The wellness IQ of the modern gym-goer is growing as they have expanded access to digital data. Yet many in our modern world struggle to utilize this data in a safe and effective manner, as medical fitness professionals, we understand the importance of an active lifestyle and the powerful impact it has across the healthcare continuum. The healthcare industry strives to leverage technology to create equitable and inclusive opportunities for all, putting us in the unique position to impact the lives of people in the comfort of their own homes. Learn how to engage corporate professionals across all industries, along their behavior change journey to support them as they safely explore new levels of physical activity and find their personal joyful movement. Takeaway methods to report outcomes while fostering a vibrant virtual community, driving participation in all your services, and expanding your reach to new members.

Success to Significance: Transforming our Healthcare System by Prioritizing our Well-Being Strategy

Mike Sabin, General Manager & Jamie Athas, Director of Wellness - Sagewell Health & Fitness

Learn how a comprehensive regional healthcare organization developed their outpatient strategy around prevention and wellness. Their new ambulatory care model includes clinical integration with health and wellness services, leading to the opening of their new medical fitness service line, Sagewell Health & Fitness. Whether you are looking add a medical fitness facility or maximize the impact of your current facility, this presentation will provide an in depth look at the key strategies to their successful launch, growth, and long-term financial success.

What Gets Measured Gets Done: The Role of Outcome Data in Industry Professionalization

Michael Stack, Founder/CEO - Applied Fitness Solutions

We know exercise “works.” We don’t need any more studies to show us it improves health and fitness. What exercise professionals haven’t broadly demonstrated is that they can get the people that need to do it, to do it for long enough, to improve their health. In short, as a profession, we’ve failed to consistently demonstrate we can produce clinically meaningful outcomes with a chronically diseased, inactive, population. This has made it challenging to fully integrate with healthcare.

The landscape is changing quickly, however. Many key national advocacy organizations are focusing on policy and systems change to integrate exercise professionals into the healthcare delivery system. In order to be prepared for this seismic shift in the healthcare landscape, exercise professionals must not only understand the role of outcome data in industry professionalization, but they must also put the proper protocols in place. Protocols that allow for the collection, safe storage, and analysis of outcome data. This lecture will provide actionable framework medical fitness facilities and professionals can deploy to maximize their programs and outcome data in a manner that will support full integration into the healthcare delivery system.

Building Strong Foundations: How to Approach & Integrate an Osteoporosis Management Exercise-Based Program

Alexis Gonzalez, Exercise Program Specialist - HealthFit Powered by Sarasota Memorial Hospital

To educate, encourage and motivate facilities and experts on how to incorporate and create an osteoporosis/osteopenia management program, which follows a strength training-based approach, as well as explaining how it is the most desirable exercise modality for increasing bone density. This presentation will cover the importance of the referral process and what are some ways of how referrals are received. As well as once a referral has been received, what criteria would be needed to make sure a potential participant is a good fit for the program. I will talk about exercise recommendations and how research-based exercise prescriptions are created for participants by their Bone density T-Scores as well as other pre-screening data. This will include why strength training is the right way to go as well as outcome data that proves the success of this program approach.

The Challenge of Access – How the 24-hour Model Fits into Medical Fitness

John Caliri, Administrative Director - FirstHealth of the Carolinas

The reality we face is that 70% of the member population does not need the expertise and direct supervision offered by the traditional medical fitness model. What they need is access to a clean, operating facility that is well thought out and taken care of, with the ability to access it based on their schedule, not ours. In an effort to improve access and affordability, FirstHealth transitioned the smallest of its medical fitness facilities to a 24-hour operation. This move took a 20+ year old business that perennially lost money and turned it around in a space of 5 months. Membership more than doubled in the first 6 months.

This development and operating style for certain situations, with a focus on access and simple membership plans, led to the development of another 24-hour facility set to open in August 2024. There are more in the beginning planning stages also. Come learn how FirstHealth did it successfully and ask those hard questions so we can see that this really does fit into the medical fitness industry.

BRIDGE-PROJECT: Bridging Research & Institutes through Digitally Guided Exercise Prescriptions with Reliable Outcomes

Dr. Matthew Kampert, Sports & Exercise Medicine Physician - Cleveland Clinic

There is no longer a gap in knowledge about the importance or benefits of cardiovascular and resistance exercise, but instead the gap exists in translating existing knowledge into innovative patient care and effectively monitoring the delivery of that care across all socioeconomic communities to improve initiation and continuation of guideline-based exercise. Without adequate education and training on exercise assessment and prescription, many medical providers are not able to utilize exercise as medicine effectively or efficiently. This highlights the need of the medical professionals to partner with exercise professionals who possess a wealth of knowledge in exercise science to bridge the gap in healthcare and translate exercise science into exercise medicine.

For years, research has shown the benefits of exercise and physical activity. However, we have lacked the tools to release its full potential. Most healthcare professionals have been able to give recommendations, but not personalized exercise prescriptions. They are able to provide some advice, but not monitor real-time exercise adherence or outcomes. There has never been a seamless way to use exercise as medicine for targeted treatment, until now.

The BRIDGE-PROJECT integrates a novel digital exercise ecosystem to provide exercise assessments, prescriptions, and exercise monitoring. The BRIDGE-PROJECT breaks down the barriers of the siloed-care model by bridging the gap between medical providers and health/fitness professionals. In this model, the physician oversees medical management of the patient and works closely with exercise physiologists who function as physician extenders. By moving beyond traditional clinical encounters and engaging patients within the communities in which they work and live.

Exercise, Anti-Obesity Medications, and Obesity Care: Updates and Programming Strategies

Dr. Renee Rogers, Senior Scientist - Univ. of Kansas Medical Center

Obesity medicine has been transformed with the introduction of contemporary anti-obesity medications which are highly effective for obesity treatment and related chronic conditions. This session will inform on the current anti-obesity medications and others that are in the developmental pipeline how they are prescribed, indicated, and medical managed. Additionally, this session will address how physical activity and lifestyle approaches need to adapt to these frontline medical treatments for obesity. This session will also highlight lessons learned from current/on-going research studies of exercise with anti-obesity medications and business models designed around GLP-1/medications use. Discussions will encompass biological, behavioral, and business considerations.

Perfecting Your Membership Sales Tour Process to Drive New Sales

Alan Loyd, Executive Director - Beacon Health & Fitness

Effective sales tours are the backbone of the dues line, the single largest revenue source in almost any club. Yet many clubs fail to create a deliberate process for handling prospects when they visit. This presentation will walk you through every step—actually beginning before the prospect even walks through the door and all the way through the sign-up process.

The Valley Health System Medical Fitness Exercise Rx. Referral Program

Don Tomaszewski, Director - Medical Fitness and Sports Institute, Valley Health System

Exercise, or physical activity, is widely recognized as a critical component of a healthy lifestyle and has been indicated to be a powerful preventative and treatment tool in the management to every disease process known to man. The global health initiative "Exercise Is Medicine" (EIM) and the incorporation of a "Physical Activity Vital Sign" (PAVS) into healthcare systems have garnered a notable amount of traction and support by large systems and medical fitness facilities across the country over the past decade.

This presentation will showcase a physician referred exercise prescription (PREP) program – the Medical Fitness Exercise Referral program at Valley Health LifeStyles in New Jersey. The development, implementation, and operational strategies of the program will be shared and discussed. In addition, we will explore the benchmark resources, the many pitfalls to be avoided, and the keys to a successful – sustainable PREP program. Valley's program boasts the utilization of the health system's EMR service as the referral medium that links directly to the medical fitness center's exercise specialists. With almost 300 referrals in 2023 an analysis of the program's referral growth patterns, patient compliance rates, and financial impact will also be discussed in this presentation.

No More Fishing: Creating the Demand for Personal Training

Doug Sham, HealthFit Manager - HealthFit Powered by Sarasota Memorial Hospital

The adage of "too many sharks and not enough fish" has been used to describe the delicate balance between staffing and clientele. In this presentation, you will learn how to build a personal training service line where demand is always there. Leave with valuable insight on hiring and service line design that will increase your total revenue.

Membership Success

Bill McBride, President & CEO - Active Wellness

This session will cover a complete overview of the optimal membership process in today's new and evolving marketplace. We will also discuss the importance of marketing and social reputation management. The focus will be on setting up a consistent, solutions-based membership enrollment process with the marketing, advertising and social support required for net membership growth and optimal revenue. This session is a must for membership sales representatives, sales managers, general managers, owners, fitness directors and any department head looking to further their experience with successful relationship development.

Get Fit, Get Well. Medically Integrating Wellness to Create a Healthier Community.

Greg Stock, CEO - Thibodaux Regional Health System

This presentation is a compelling message highlighting the importance of wellness-focused healthcare and the benefits of physician-guided, patient-centered clinical pathways, as well as the utilization of data, analytics, and improvement science in developing patient-centered wellness programs.

Effective Performance Training & its Place in Medical Fitness

Patrick Labat, Manager - Performance Training Center at Terrebonne General Health System

This presentation dives into sports performance training's vital role within the medical fitness sphere, highlighting its significance in optimizing athletic performance while remaining an asset to the bottom line. We will address the challenges posed by limited space, financial constraints, and staffing issues, underscoring the need for innovative solutions and strategic planning to overcome these obstacles. By exploring the intersection of sports training and medical fitness, this presentation offers valuable insights into maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in achieving optimal health and performance outcomes for athletes and individuals alike.

The Membership Equation: Balancing Sales & Retention for Health Clubs

Kimberly Smith, General Manager at the HealthFitness/Advocate Condell Centre Club

In this lecture, we will delve into the intricacies of sales and retention within the dynamic landscape of health clubs. Our exploration will commence with a comprehensive examination of the fundamental principles underpinning successful sales techniques tailored specifically to the health club industry. We will dissect the art of effective communication, emphasizing the importance of understanding customer needs and aspirations, and how to tailor offerings to resonate with their desires.

Moving forward, we will transition into the realm of member retention, where we will uncover the underlying factors influencing member churn and explore proactive strategies to mitigate attrition. Through case studies and real-world examples, we will dissect common challenges faced by health clubs in retaining their membership base and present actionable solutions to enhance member engagement and loyalty.

Reverse Heart Disease with Intensive Cardiac Rehabilitation

Meredith Cleveland, Program Director - Ornish Lifestyle Medicine Program at the Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

What is Ornish Lifestyle Medicine? It is a comprehensive lifestyle program that is scientifically proven to reverse the progression of heart disease without drugs or surgery. The program deals with the root causes of heart disease and not just its effects. The program focuses on four elements – Nutrition, Exercise, Stress Management, and Love and Connection. For nearly 40 years, Dr. Ornish has studied these comprehensive lifestyle changes and their effect on the reversion of coronary heart disease. Dr. Ornish's studies have shown that after three years, 77% of intervention patients avoided revascularization, with no increased frequency of cardiac events. The program consists of a comprehensive clinical team of a Medical Director, Registered Nurse, Exercise Physiologists, Registered Dietician, and a Stress Management Specialist. Medicare and many commercial insurance companies reimburse accredited providers for 72 hours over 9 weeks of Intensive Cardiac Rehabilitation. Sarasota Memorial Hospital has been providing this program since January 2016. We will be graduating our 100th cohort in October.

Delivering Clinical Outcomes Via Evidence-Based Group Exercise Programming

Bryce Hastings, Head of Research at Les Mills & Dr. Gillian Hatfield, Associate Professor of Kinesiology at the University of the Fraser Valley

This lecture will discuss evidence-based principles for exercise prescription to strengthen key muscles in the core. We will highlight recent research investigating the effectiveness of group exercise classes in managing individuals with lower back pain. Attendees will walk away with the knowledge to prescribe exercises in a group setting so they can provide scalable management strategies for this large clinical group.

Running Toward Innovation: Energizing Your Cardio Space with Exciting Exerciser Experiences

Leigh Wierichs, Global Training & Education Manager at Life Fitness

The cardio exerciser experiences has remained stable for several years. Dig into research to understand how exercisers are engaging with cardio spaces now and how innovation can energize your cardio space. We will discuss new innovations in cardio equipment and the research that drove these changes. We will specifically dissect these innovations as it relates to biomechanics and how exercisers can benefit from different levels of deck firmness as well as how this is applicable for rehabilitation and the active aging population.

Thursday, November 21

Reversing Osteoporosis in a Medical Fitness Facility

Jason Conviser, President - Ascend – Consultation in Health Care

Osteogenic Loading is the process of overloading the bone (in the same way we would overload a muscle for growth) once a week for one year. Numerous peer reviewed and independent studies have shown this strategy of bone overload results in 4-8% growth / improvement in DEXA scores after one year. We have been offering this program to our clients for the past 11 years and have had 211 individuals complete at least one year of participation resulting in a success rate (bone improvement) in 81% of the participants in at least 2 of the 4 reported anatomical areas reported in a DEXA scan.

FIT FOR BUSINESS: Leading for Maximum Performance

Sara Kooperman, JD, CEO - SCW Fitness Education

Being a leader seems glamorous. We all think it gives us freedom, extra income and power. In reality, leadership and management are draining, exhausting, and often leave you wanting to pull the covers over your head. Discover how to lead for maximum performance using simple tricks to provide you the success you deserve, the time you so desperately need and the fulfillment that makes your career worth pursuing!

Great management is not asking someone to do something; it's about making sure that it gets done. Explore effective ways to evaluate your platform, schedule important projects, and measure your staff performance taking out the personal and injecting the profitable. Managing is about systems and satisfaction. Having a successful career is making a difference through effective, honest, and open-minded leadership.

Virtual Post-Stroke Clinic

Blake Hamill, Senior Director of Operations & Dave Hopkins, Director of Wellness - Power Wellness

We will be outlining how to provide this Fitness education program for post-stroke patients utilizing cloud-based video communication. This is a 12-week program involving five live video sessions per week by two of our fitness team members. Each participant performs both a pre- and post-assessment so we can measure their outcomes/progress. They are required to attend at least two sessions per week. The exercise programming consists of a warm-up, functional strength, balance, agility, and cool-down sections. The goal of this lecture is to show other wellness centers how to implement this type of program in their community.

Breakout Roundtables & Networking

We have facilitators leading discussions on: Members-Recruit & Retain; Qualified Staff-Seeking & Keeping; Kickin' Off Your Career the MFA Way; Working with Health Systems to Enhance Budget and Invest in Medical Fitness; Group Exercise; Bridging the gap between physical therapy/cardiac rehab (outpatient rehabs) and personal training; and Relatable-Sharing common experiences between different positions. Bring your own topics too!

Resistance Training Programming for the Medical Fitness Professional - PART 1 & 2

Jeff Young, Co-Owner of MRF Institute; Mike Stack, CEO of Applied Fitness Solutions; & Dr. Andrew Mock, Asst. Professor of Preventive Med. at Loma Linda Univ.

The purpose of this seminar and workshop is to provide principle- and evidence-based information on clinically safe, progressive, resistance training programming for older adults, and individuals with chronic disease and/or musculoskeletal conditions. The seminar will include information on how to determine appropriate start points and safe rates of progression for your clients. The hands-on portion will provide instruction on how to properly execute common lifts (e.g., squats, presses) while considering mobility and/or joint issues.

Moving the Fitness Industry Into Healthcare Reimbursement in the Right Way

Graham Melstrand, CEO of ActivSport; Dr. Amy Bantham, CEO of Move to Live More; & Mike Goscinski, VP Gov't Affairs, at the Health & Fitness Association

The IRS has published new guidance for individuals with HSA/FSA accounts who would like to use them for physical activity programs and interventions which creates opportunities for participants, exercise professionals and the facilities that employ them. While this is a tremendous opportunity, it comes with strict criteria that must be followed and any deviation from those criteria could result in damage to the reputation of individuals, organizations and the broader health and fitness industry, This session will provide the framework for a successful implementation of a strategy that allows fitness program participants to use their HSA/FSA dollars for certain physical activity programs.

Providing AOMs for Your Clients on Anti-Obesity Medications

Raina Childers-Richmond, Director of Partner Success at Health One

Interest in Anti-Obesity Medications (AOMs) is exploding. These exciting tools are providing hope and momentum for those seeking support in the management of the disease of Obesity. Are we as practitioners and healthcare organizations positioned to meet the needs of these individuals? Like them or not, these medications are not going away and our clients desire our services. By educating our teams and by offering: A: Activity Guidance; O: Optimized Nutrition; M: Management of Symptoms; S: Support for the Long Term to those who have decided to use medication on their weight loss journey, we can increase their chances of long-term success in health improvement.

Well-Being for their People Means Well-Being for their Business: How Medical Fitness Aligns & Unlocks Direct-to-Employer Contracting

Joel Hungate, Executive Director of Well-Being - Hancock Health

Are you using Medical Fitness as a differentiator to win business through direct-contracting with employers? 55% of Americans receive health insurance through an employer, and healthcare systems traditionally haven't had to worry about aligning and understanding the employer experience at all because the insurance intermediaries held all the power. Those days are gone. Healthcare is expensive, insurers are slashing reimbursement, denials are at all-time highs, health systems are looking for any service line to eliminate the dependence on their payer overlords in order to survive, and employers and their benefit advisors are caught in the middle wishing there was a partner who understood how to truly help reduce the total cost of care.

That partner could and should be YOU. Learn how Medical Fitness is integral to brokering a new kind of relationship amongst employers and health systems to create strategic value and foster uncommon alignment for the future of health!

The Brain Health Opportunity for Medical Fitness

Ryan Glatt, Director of FitBrain Program - Pacific Brain Health Center

This presentation delves into the evolving role of medical fitness programs in enhancing brain health, underscoring the potential for these programs to address future societal brain health challenges. Participants will gain an understanding of how incorporating cognitive exercises into medical fitness programs can improve brain function and contribute to long-term cognitive health. This presentation emphasizes the significance of integrating cognitive exercises with physical training to optimize brain function and prevent cognitive decline. Participants will be equipped with the strategies to design and implement neuro-fitness programs that not only improve individual health outcomes but also address broader societal challenges related to aging and cognitive health. Insights from notable studies are discussed to showcase the practical applications and outcomes of brain health initiatives. This presentation will review empirical evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of integrated physical and cognitive exercise programs in enhancing brain health.

The Science of Aging and Exercise Programming for Older Adults

Anthony Wall, Senior Director of Global Business Development - American Council on Exercise

Average life expectancy has increased by 30 years in the last century. This remarkable shift means a growing population of older adults and more opportunities for you to cater to their well-being. To do this successfully, having a comprehensive understanding of aging as a distinct part of the lifecycle is key.

Older adults possess a range of physical abilities and aspirations—all to be celebrated. Adopting an “age-appropriate” mindset, meaning projecting yourself into an age for context, will serve you and your clients best. By understanding their physical changes, motivations and how they differ from their younger counterparts, you will be equipped to create effective, fulfilling exercise experiences.

This session will help you explore the importance of health and exercise for the aging population, gain a new perspective on older adults and their unique needs, and learn to create appropriate programming for this population.

The 7 C's of Creating your Own Signature Wellness Program

Debbie Bellenger, CEO/Founder - DB Fitness and Wellness Solutions

In this session, we will share how and why signature wellness programs are key to serving the local community needs, how they can improve the non-dues revenues line item, and how to create your own program to meet the needs of your market. We will discuss the 7 C's of Wellness Programming based on my experiences creating effective and award winning wellness programs.

Pilates in Medical Fitness for Healthcare Integration

Lauren Sham, Pilates Instructor - HealthFit Powered by Sarasota Memorial Hospital

This presentation will explain the benefits of adding Pilates as a service line in a medical fitness center for healthcare integration. Utilizing Pilates for special populations can be a referral pathway within the healthcare system. Adding Pilates as a service line will increase revenue and quality and variety of care for patients and clients. Learn that Pilates is not just stretching and it is not only for women!

Retention Solved: Why People Leave and the Paradigm Shift that Answers the Problem

Cosmo Wollan, Sr. Executive - Synergy Cubed

Whether you are a Commercial Gym, a Multi-Purpose Health Club, or a full-fledged Medical Fitness Facility, wherever your membership is fee-based, you always run the risk that paying members will leave. Nationwide, the average attrition rate of health club members is between 35-40% annually. Considering how hard it is to get members in the door in the first place, this is not good. Not for the facility, not for the bottom line, and certainly not for the population health we all seek to improve. This session will explain the true reasons (not the spoken excuses) that members leave and discuss how a simple change in mindset can make a huge difference in attracting, keeping, and truly servicing, your members.

Strategic Partner of the Year Showcase: Medical Fitness Resources from the Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's

Kayla Ferguson, Pedaling for Parkinson's Program Manager

Does your facility have programming for people with Parkinson's? Check out this session to hear about all of the wonderful resources available to you from the Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's!

Pay it Forward with Exercise: Providing Physicians, Providing Patients

Corley Roberts, CEO - MyFitScript, LLC

Providing healthcare practitioners and organizations with the tools and resources to then provide for their patients is what I call 'paying it forward with exercise'. Physicians/practitioners want to see improved outcomes, need to see improved outcomes in today's value-based outcome-driven healthcare environment. Many strides are being made by the efforts of organizations like Exercise is Medicine, Physical Activity Alliance, and even reimbursement opportunities. As exercise professionals we are uniquely positioned to take the lead on the effort to integrate physical activity into healthcare and bring our expertise to the table. We are our biggest asset. It's a winding road but we're all on it together we just need to know how to navigate the turns.