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**PHC Pilot Program Helps Members In Shasta, Humboldt Counties Lose Weight, Boost Health**

FAIRFIELD – “I wanted to participate in life instead of being a bystander,” Katina Lauderdale, 43, of Redding says about why she jumped at the chance to participate in a Weight Watchers Warriors Pilot Program sponsored by Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC).



PHC, the nonprofit health plan that administers Medi-Cal benefits to more than 565,000 people in 14 Northern California counties, funded the 12-month pilot through its Strategic Use of Reserves program and has offered it to PHC members in Shasta and Humboldt counties who meet certain criteria and are recommended to the program by their primary care provider.



“The benefits that a weight-loss program can offer our members are immense,” PHC says. “Obesity affects health in so many ways, and weight management is a proactive step for our members to avoid obesity-related illnesses.”

*Before and after: PHC members Katina Lauderdale, top and Leanne Kopitzke.*

Lauderdale’s weight-loss efforts have had great health benefits. She was taken off her blood pressure medication, her cholesterol went down, and she no longer has to use a CPAP machine for sleep apnea. Lauderdale successfully completed the program, losing more than 84 pounds during the 12-month pilot and has lost a total of more than 93 pounds to date. She’s also become physically

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active again, recently riding a bike for the first time in 30 years.

Another PHC member who has regained an active lifestyle is Leanne Kopitzke, 58, of Redding.

“I’m trying all sorts of new things that I never would have done before losing the weight,” says Kopitzke, who lost 63 pounds and is now a Lifetime Member at Weight Watchers. “I’m hiking mountains and looking to do my first 5K run.”

She also has been riding bikes, paddle boarding and roller skating with her grandchildren. “I feel younger, more vibrant,” she says.

She says that when a postcard arrived from PHC more than a year ago offering the pilot program, she was miserable. “I thought, ‘this might be my chance’,” she recalls.

Kopitzke said the support and motivation of the other women at Weight Watchers helped keep her on track. “I just kept going,” she recalls “I kept at it and lost all the weight in time for my 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.”

PHC says that some Shasta County participants are still finishing up their yearlong Weight Watchers Warriors Pilot Program, and those in Humboldt County are more than halfway through their 12-month effort. The nonprofit health plan devoted a total of \$60,000 for the two pilots. Participants committed to attend meetings, lose at least 2 pounds a month, and visit their primary care provider as required.

### **About Partnership HealthPlan of California (PHC)**

PHC is a nonprofit community-based health care organization that contracts with the State to administer Medi-Cal benefits. PHC provides quality health care to over 560,000 Medi-Cal members. Beginning in Solano County in 1994 PHC now provides services to 14 Northern California counties – Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Trinity, and Yolo.