

Local 469 Health Fair promotes prevention

Richard “Dusty” Nevers from Chandler, Ariz. and a retired pipefitter of 43 years, took time for a heart-health screening last year during the annual Arizona Pipe Trades Local 469 Health Fair. The free test may have saved his life.

The screening results showed some artery blockage. A trip to a heart specialist confirmed the diagnosis, and Nevers ended up having a stent put in to open his narrowed artery.

“I really need to thank the Local because going to the health fair may have saved my life,” says Nevers. “I wouldn’t have even thought about having the tests done had it not been convenient to just go to the fair.”

Experts agree that the best way to cut medical costs, improve the quality of care and improve people’s lives is to focus on prevention.

Local 469 is doing exactly that by holding its annual health fair to make preventative health screenings and education more convenient for employees.

“It’s all about taking care of our members and their families, which is why we started doing the health fair,” says Aaron Butler, Local 469 business manager. “If we can detect potential health issues early, we can help improve their health and maybe even save some lives.”

Doris Danforth, Local 469 fringe benefit services coordinator, says her team pushed for this eight years ago, because they wanted to make a difference in the lives of the members by providing added health services not normally covered by medical insurance.

The Local 469’s health fair has long offered prostate cancer, breast cancer, and other wellness screenings, as well as free flu and pneumonia vaccines. Last year it introduced cardiovascular disease screening and this year a shingles vaccine.

Many organizations, figuring a dime of prevention is worth a dollar of cure, look toward health fairs as a way to supplement health care offerings and to educate employees about wellness and preventative medicine.

Danforth says that more than 800 members and participants attended the 2013 health fair and about the same number are expected at this year’s fair on Oct. 4.

More information about Local 469: ualocal469.org

