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Media Contact: Beth Laski  
818-986-1105 or 818-300-5424  
blaski@wellcoaches.com

## **WELLNESS COACHING STUDY FINDS LONG TERM BENEFITS FOR CANCER SURVIVORS**

**Wellesley, MA January 20, 2010** – Wellness coaching has the potential to bridge the gap between clinical medicine and wellness to improve the overall well-being of cancer survivors, according to new research published in the *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* and conducted by The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey.

Wellcoaches-modeled wellness coaching had significant, immediate, and lasting impact in reducing anxiety and depression, while simultaneously improving quality of life and increasing engagement in other healthy lifestyle behaviors for cancer survivors, according to the findings.

While life-saving cancer treatments have increased the number of cancer survivors in the U.S. to nearly 12 million, the long-term side effects can damage their overall health and quality of life, according to the American Cancer Society. The ACS recommends survivors maintain a healthy weight and engage in healthy lifestyle habits to reduce risk of recurrence, other chronic diseases, and death, yet the majority of survivors do not follow ACS guidelines, according to recent research.

The study's principle Investigator, Dr. Mary Lou Galantino, PT, PhD, MSCE, professor at Stockton College and Adjunct Research Scholar at University of Pennsylvania, said this is the first research study published utilizing wellness coaching methodology as a single intervention, which was shown to have promising results and potential application in other areas.

"We certainly need randomized, controlled trials to confirm our findings, but we are excited about our initial results," said Dr. Galantino.

The coaching study was co-led by Wellcoaches faculty member and cancer survivor Pam Schmid, and looked at the initial and longitudinal benefits that wellness coaching could bring to cancer survivors. The idea to apply this methodology to cancer survivorship came in 2004, when Ms. Schmid was diagnosed with breast cancer. She recognized the wide reaching benefits coaching might offer survivors, after struggling personally with the challenges that the illness and treatment brought her way.

"Being a health and fitness professional, I knew what I needed to do to be healthy and feel my best, yet so many obstacles came my way," reveals Ms. Schmid. "I knew other cancer survivors were having the same difficult experience and were challenged in doing the things that might help them the most. Some health behaviors, for example, can reduce our risk of recurrence or dying of cancer by as much as 50 percent. We have to support survivors to do the things they *can* do to diminish their risks and improve their quality of life."

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In this observational cohort study of 30 breast, prostate, and colorectal cancer survivors, participants received six coaching sessions over a three-month period. They were followed for a year after the intervention to evaluate the sustainability of changes through the wellness coaching. The wellness coach was a fitness professional certified as an ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine) Health Fitness Specialist and Wellcoaches Corporation certified wellness coach, a certification endorsed by the ACSM. Wellcoaches is the industry leader in wellness coach training.

Wellcoaches founder and CEO Margaret Moore (aka Coach Meg) said the study findings reinforce the powerful anecdotal evidence that Wellcoaches certified coaches and their clients have reported for years. “The goal for all of our coaches worldwide is to help people live healthier, happier and more productive lives. We are especially proud of Pam Schmid’s personal commitment to helping cancer patients live life to its fullest,” said Ms. Moore.

The field of coaching is gaining academic credibility with the recent founding of the new Institute of Coaching ([www.instituteofcoaching.org](http://www.instituteofcoaching.org)) at McLean Hospital, affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Ms. Moore is a co-director of the institute, which is building a scientific foundation for coaching psychology, and setting standards for coaching research.

In this study of cancer survivor participants, who were coached in three states, each reported that during the study they increased fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity, and reduced their weight and BMI, all of which was sustained one year after the intervention ended. The most helpful aspect reported was the motivation and feedback they received as they worked towards their goals. Some other study dimensions:

- All sessions were conducted by phone
- Agenda/goals were client directed
- Survivors developed a wellness vision and three month goals
- Follow-up sessions supported consistent progress towards their vision/goals
- Expertise was given in a “just-in-time” method only as needed
- Utilized a strength-based approach

For more details on the study, please visit <http://www.healthyandfitaftercancer.com>.

### ABOUT WELLCOACHES CORPORATION

Wellcoaches Corporation is setting a gold standard for professional coaches in healthcare and building the professions of health coach and wellness coach, in strategic partnership with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM). Founded by Margaret Moore (aka Coach Meg) in 2000, Wellcoaches has trained more than 4,000 physical and mental health professionals as health or wellness coaches in 32 countries, and now trains more than 1,000 coaches each year. Together, Wellcoaches and its coaches are helping people to take charge of their health and well-being and go beyond what they imagined possible on a large scale.

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