



BY STACY BOOTH

PREVENTING DISEASE

BY TAKING CHARGE

Treuman Katz always knew he had the potential to become diabetic. With a father and paternal grandmother with the disease, he paid attention to his nutrition and tried to take care of himself.

Treuman also stayed thin, and he says he thought he'd be OK. Around five years ago, when Treuman was tested during his annual exam, he found out he was, in fact, prediabetic. "It was a wake-up call and so

I was determined not to convert, as they say, to being a diabetic."

For Treuman avoiding the disease meant even more stringency with his diet and exercise. As he spoke with doctors and tried different things, he eventually found that, for him, the best route was to work not only with a trainer at the Bellevue Club, but also to use both his traditional Western medical doctor and a naturopath. With an MD and an ND plus his trainer behind him, Treuman has

taken himself out of the prediabetic classification. He says, however, his numbers still aren't low enough: "I'm determined to take it lower because I don't think I've done everything I can," he says.

Because natural medicine helped Treuman, he became more interested in its benefits for everyone—especially the children he served at Children's Hospital in Seattle. Treuman spent 26 years of his career as Children's president and CEO, and

retired in 2005. Treuman's wife, Sue Ellen, was an advocate for natural medicine, having had a naturopathic doctor for years before the couple met. She is very likely a big reason why Treuman started using some naturopathic medicine and is an advocate for integrating Western and Eastern medicine today. His voice on the issue is even more remarkable because he spent his career in Western medicine as a health-care administrator and grew up with a father who was a pediatrician. "In my family you couldn't use the word 'chiropractor' or 'osteopath,'" he says.

When natural medicine helped Treuman with his health issues, he saw the potential for it to help the children he served. During his time at the hospital, Treuman started a pain-management program for kids that includes acupuncture. Since his departure, the program has expanded and become very popular. Children's also now has a working relationship with Bastyr University's dispensary so the hospital has resources available if children are taking natural medicines at home. "Children's needs to be very open to understanding and being able to have parents talk to them about all the medicines—natural and otherwise—the kids may be on," says Treuman.

In addition to his work bringing alternative medicine to Children's, the hospital's board of trustees created an endowed center for pediatric bioethics which is named the Treuman Katz Center for Pediatric Bioethics. He was also given the title of President Emeritus. "I think that it's probably rare to have a career and have major contributions nationally and particularly regionally and improve the life of kids, so it's very rewarding," he says.

Now in retirement, Treuman is staying busy. He works with his trainer, Jason Kennedy, three days a week plus hour-long sessions on the treadmill five days a week. Treuman has also joined the board of Bastyr University, where he helped bring the natural medicine college's first MD to the board. "Some of what I've tried to do in my own life is bring

together Eastern and Western (medicine). In some sense I'm trying to do that at Bastyr as well," he says. Treuman is also a voice for consumers as the chair of the Washing-

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ton State Board of Health, a position Gov. Christine Gregoire appointed him to in January 2007. One of the agenda items is diabetes and prevention through education, something Treuman is passionate about. He is also passionate about working toward a health-care system that focuses on prevention, not treatment.

Because diabetes is headed toward epidemic numbers in the United States, Treuman is concerned that children in particular need to learn what they can do to stay healthy. "For the most part it's all preventable with proper nutrition and exercise," he says. "As we look around, we see kids eating junk food and drinks that are full of sugar. There's no doubt that we're setting ourselves up for more and more disease." He adds that even with all the parenting issues parents face, modeling healthy behavior and providing nutritious food and plenty of exercise opportunities need to occur. "If we don't get a handle on this and focus on prevention, it's basically going to be—it already is—very costly to our society because in essence we're creating chronically ill people who will be treated for the rest of their lives. If we put the resources up front in prevention, we can save so much on the other side."

For Treuman, one of the keys to staying healthy and having a high quality of life into old age is taking responsi-

bility for his health, something he thinks everyone needs to do through diet, exercise and overall lifestyle. "I don't know that everything I've done is going to extend my life, and that's not my objective. Yeah, I'd like to be around to see my granddaughter married someday, as an example. But what I know is, what I feel is that what I'm doing will give me a better quality of life for whatever number of years I have. That's

what I'm after and I feel that now. I'm just going to keep doing it."



OPPOSITE Treuman was CEO and president of Children's Hospital in Seattle for 26 years. He retired in 2005.

TOP Treuman credits his wife, Sue Ellen, with introducing him to natural medicine. Here, they are pictured with their grandchildren, Sadie and Logan Malmevik.



LEFT Treuman works out almost daily at the Club in order to ward off diabetes. He works with a Club trainer three days a week and spends at least five hours a week on a treadmill.