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Adding a fun challenge to the summer

Chronic pain over the past year has had an impact on Alana Shearer-Kleefeld's quality of life and ability to simply move. As part of the Better U Challenge, Shearer-Kleefeld, manager of Employee Benefits Administration at 3sHealth, will share her story as she endeavours to reverse the impact of months of inactivity. Keep coming back to visit us here or on Facebook to learn about her progress.

At a recent corporate wall walk, Alana Shearer-Kleefeld threw down the gauntlet.

"As part of the Better U Challenge, the employee benefits team would like to challenge the 3sHealth senior leadership team to a step competition," she said. "The loser has to prepare and serve lunch to the winners."

Essentially, each team member will track their daily steps using a pedometer or whatever device they have (Fitbit, iPhone app, etc.) and enter their steps into a spreadsheet. The contest started July 1 and as of July 12 the senior leadership team is ahead by more than 400,000.

"It's early yet," says Shearer-Kleefeld. "The positive thing about the challenge is it's motivating me to get in some cardio every day. When I get home from work, I look at my steps and I know I have to get on the treadmill so I can contribute my 10,000 steps to the team."

She might not have anticipated the dogged competitive nature of the senior leadership team but winning isn't really the end game for Shearer-Kleefeld.

"I just love the culture we have here at 3sHealth and the fun we're having with this competition – I think the entire organization will be watching this unfold. I'd love to see other teams in the regions try similar challenges and really encourage everyone to find ways to enrich their lives with a little fun, some friendly competition, and a little movement."

On her own journey, Shearer-Kleefeld says she continues to work hard toward her goal. Hip pain has returned and is once again plaguing her sleep but she's not deterred.

"I've lost three pounds so far and I can feel my body changing," she says. "I'm following the 80-20 rule – eating healthy 80 per cent of the time and about 20 per cent of the time, I'm digging into the chip bowl. I'm not eating the whole bag though. It is having an impact even if I'm the only one that can tell."