

'Hometown' video puts health tips on TV, Web

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Want to learn about natural remedies for insect bites, get some disease-prevention tips, or maybe find a specialist?

A locally produced health-medical news video program called Hometown Health TV offers up-to-date information.

The program serves as a marketing tool for health-care providers and is available in participating-provider waiting rooms and offices.

It airs at 11 a.m. Saturdays on LakeFront TV, which can be seen on Comcast Channel 22, Florida Cable Channel 4 and Bright House Channel 199.

Marc Robertz, 41, launched his marketing business in March. Robertz said some viewers may watch a portion of it in waiting rooms, and perhaps check more of it out either online or on LakeFront TV.

He produces 60 minutes of programming per month, designing it to be entertaining as well as educational and informative.

"We work about four to five weeks in advance," he said.

The entire content can also be viewed at www.HometownHealthTV.com. The site includes a directory of the health-care providers served, with information on each.

"It allows doctors a unique marketing platform, but we didn't want people to feel like they're being marketed to," he said.

One of his favorite segments is "On the Spot," when he goes to health expos, outdoor festivals, local sports events and other occasions, interviewing people on the street or on site.

For one in April, male bikers were interviewed at the Leesburg Bikefest.

"Imagine a bunch of big, burly bikers getting interviewed about men's health," he said. "Interestingly enough, their female counterparts -- like wives and girlfriends -- knew more about men's health than they did."

Robertz interviewed both male and female bikers on issues such as increasing life span by quitting smoking, hand hygiene and common forms of cancer. Some were educated briefly on the importance of wearing sunscreen to avoid skin cancer.

Robertz said some of them joked about their sunburns at Bikefest, poking their arms to show the red coloration.

"They wore these sleeveless shirts with their shoulders burnt because they don't wear sunscreen," he said.

'A great network'

This month, there's a do-it-yourself segment featuring home remedies for insect bites such as fresh crushed parsley, or an antacid tablet such as Tums or Rolaids. Instructions say rub both on a bite.

"There's nothing more annoying than going out on a golf run and getting bit by mosquitoes," he said.

Emily Madison, administrator for Caregiver Services based in Summerfield, said being one of the health providers in Robertz's program has been helpful.

Care Giver Services provides home health care through a pool of skilled nurses or companions to enable a person with disabilities to live in their home effectively.

Madison said she has also enjoyed meeting some of the other participating providers.

"It's really a great network," she said. "And there's a nice sense of community, being involved in Hometown Health."

'Power of video'

Based in Fruitland Park, Robertz delivers a 60-minute DVD to health-care providers once a month. He said he has been involved in television about 20 years.

When he first got into television, the Internet was not a player in the media mix, he said.

So, he has witnessed that evolution up close.

He moved to Lake from South Florida 61/2 years ago to work for The Villages cable channel. He did that for 51/2 years.

"The reason I got into TV was to affect the community," he said. "It's the power of video and the power of storytelling."

Credit: Rosalind Jennings, Special To The Sentinel

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Abstract (Document Summary)

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