Physical fitness and activity have long been known to be beneficial in preventing as well as treating most major medical issues. One of the fathers of modern American medicine said over 100 years ago that if exercise were a pill nothing would be more used or abused. This is certainly truer today than it was then. Study after study verifies that physical inactivity leads to significantly worse health; not in just the realms of metabolic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease but also diseases which are harder to associate with inactivity, such as cancer. The American Cancer Society lists obesity and associated inactivity when identifying the top three preventable causes of cancer. Managing heart disease and diabetes are linked strongly to exercise and conditioning. Numerous studies even document that dementia onset is totally related to exercise and physical activity.

As a family physician in this community for 40 years, it became apparent to me that most of my patients felt that they had nowhere to exercise. After 15 years of trying to provide a place to support the community's need for physical exercise and activity, including the needs of the older and less healthy population, the hospital foundation was able to bring the Powell Wellness Center to the greater Culpeper community.

In keeping with this goal of meeting all needs through exercise, Powell Wellness Center has become a medical fitness center. Under this certification through the Medical Fitness Association, medical supervision can be accomplished as needed compared with other local sites which provide no medical oversight or supervision. Powell has a medical oversight committee which meets regularly and is made up of healthcare professionals who oversee the programs and activities of the center. All of the members feel very strongly about the use of exercise as a major treatment in prevention and treatment of almost all diseases.

Dr. Brevard Wallace

Culpeper community physician and co-chair of the Powell Wellness Center Medical Advisory Board