

Michelle Rogers
Community Outreach and Education Manager
805-388-1952, ext. 116
micheller@camhealth.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Supervisor Kelly Long samples 3 popular programs offered by Camarillo Health Care District

Imagine balancing yourself on one leg while using two drumsticks to select your answers on an electrified board game designed to improve your cognition and reduce your fall risk, in a dress suit with heels.

Ventura County Supervisor Kelly Long, District 3, knocked it out of the park on Jan. 26 when she visited the Camarillo Health Care District and participated in one of the many programs of the Camarillo Health Care District's Fall Prevention and Strengthening services. Long's district includes central and southern portions of Camarillo, including parts of the Camarillo Health Care District.

During the visit, Long became familiar with the District's BALANCEfit, SMARTfit and Adventures in Virtual Reality (VR) programming, which are all part of the District's Fall Prevention programming.

SMARTfit is physical and cognitive training disguised as fun games that make you think while you move. It's designed to deliver preventive and rehabilitative solutions to cognitive functions as well as motor functions.

"Its unique approach to improving physical, cognitive and mental health is engaging, exciting and very interactive," said the District's CEO, Kara Ralston.

SMARTfit is designed for a variety of populations and abilities, and immerses participants in playing easy-to-learn exercise games that are challenging and motivating. The exercise machine provides brain and body training, measuring cognitive-motor abilities. It's geared toward improving balance and reducing the risk of falls. Participants complete a baseline assessment and receive an individualized program with recommended training games.

"This program is so much fun and before you know it, you have improved balance and strength, and reduced your risk of falling," said Elsa Sierra, the District's fall prevention coordinator who assisted Long during her experience.

Similar to SMARTfit, BALANCEfit focuses on reducing fall risks and improving cognition while progressing participants through a series of games that get more complex and challenging as you move through the levels. A wide variety of games focus on cognitive and physical skills, some of which may be second nature, and some of which might be more challenging, especially for those with a cognitive impairment. Games are easy to learn and follow, while enhancing motor-skill learning and having fun. The device tracks your performance and makes the games more challenging as you get better at them. An assessment evaluates physical and cognitive function, including reaction time, ability to take in information, ability to process and then do the requested activity.

Before wrapping up her time on Friday, Long and her staff put on a VR headset as Health Promotion Coordinator Mariana Gutierrez took them on a virtual travel adventure. They used the YouTube application to access AirPano VR and explore some of the “7 Wonders of the World.” They also got in a workout using the application “Beat Saber.” The District’s Adventures in VR program was named “Innovative Program of the Year” in 2023 by the California Special District’s Association during its annual awards. Since its inception in fall 2022, more than 500 people have participated in VR classes, helping to improve their digital literacy while combatting social isolation through small-group gatherings and discussions.