

Best Practices

INNOVATIVE HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS: CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL AND HEALTH SYSTEM



Location: Wisconsin and Northern Illinois
Industry: Healthcare provider
Size: 5,000 employees in Wisconsin and Illinois
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Wellness is part of the culture at Children's Hospital and Health System (CHHS). Senior leadership has embraced wellness as an integral portion of the overall corporate strategy—under its People Pillar of Excellence. They believe their strategies are dependent on employee health and have assembled a dedicated and innovative wellness team and engaged employees in every part of the organization. Peggy Troy, President and Chief Executive Officer, is a wellness champion: "I've always been a big fan of exercise. You need to invest time in your health. The returns are huge."

BACKGROUND

Children's Hospital and Health System is an independent health care system dedicated solely to the health and

well-being of children. The 14 entities that make up the health system work to improve the lives of children everywhere through care giving, advocacy, research and education. CHHS comprises about 100 separate locations in Wisconsin and Northern Illinois, employing over 5,000 people.

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, the flagship of the system, is one of the nation's top pediatric facilities. It is also a Level I Pediatric Trauma Center verified by the American College of Surgeons. Founded in 1894, Children's Hospital serves children with all types of illnesses, injuries, birth defects and other disorders from Wisconsin, Michigan, Northern Illinois and beyond.

Children's Hospital is a private, independent, not-for-profit hospital, a major teaching affiliate of The Medical College of Wisconsin, and is affiliated with more than a dozen schools of nursing. A number of other pediatric education programs also are associated with the hospital.

HEALTH AND DENTAL PLAN DESIGN

CHHS offers employees three health plan options: PPO, EPO and a high deductible health plan (HDHP) with an employer contribution to a health savings account. Preventive care services (including immunizations, pap smears, mammograms, adult routine physicals, well-baby and well-child care, routine diagnostic service, routine colonoscopy and PSA testing) are covered at 100% on all plans. Employees earn Healthy Steps wellness credits when they receive their annual preventive care services.

The CHHS dental plan options also provide generous coverage for preventive services. CHHS offers employees two dental plan options. Each includes 100% coverage for two dental cleanings per calendar year plus two additional cleanings for members who are pregnant or have certain health conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart).

WELLNESS ORGANIZATION

A Wellness Committee, consisting of voluntary team captains, works with a wellness vendor/consultant to create a wellness program and activities, including fitness, nutrition, stress management, spiritual and emotional well being, occupational health and personal growth. The Wellness Committee uses a combination of data and a good deal of imagination to bring programs to employees

that are fun, rewarding and get results. Each quarter, the committee issues a Wellness Challenge to encourage behavior change with program components that increase activity, enhance nutrition and decrease stress.

The wellness programs are overseen by an employee health and wellness manager and wellness coordinator. Their jobs are to work with other managers, including the benefits manager, to coordinate services and rewards and to design and implement the wellness program.

The Public Relations team provides excellent support in communicating the program, timelines, incentives, and health information to employees system-wide.

WELLNESS PROGRAM

Healthy Steps, the CHHS wellness program, consists of web-based programs to help employees learn about, and minimize, their potential health risks and earn credits to reduce their health insurance premiums. Healthy Steps has three levels of incentives, with a fourth to be added in 2010. Employees earn credits for participating in the wide variety of programs available, including fitness, preventive care, health screenings, tobacco cessation and other activities. All three tiers qualify an employee for a \$20/month premium reduction. Advanced tiers reward employees with fitness/nutrition reimbursement. The fourth tier (to be added in 2010) will acknowledge employees who achieve biometric results in the normal range. Personalized plans are available for employees who are unable to achieve program requirements, due to a medical condition.

Both the wellness assessment and biometric screening are required to earn annual program incentives.

One of the most successful wellness activities is the company picnic at the Milwaukee County Zoo. The Healthier You at the Zoo tent is a very popular component and includes a number of vendors providing wellness information, body fat assessment, blood pressure screening, smoking cessation help, physical activities, and games and prizes for everyone. Healthy Steps credits are awarded to participants to the tent.

NUTRITION

The Healthy Steps program includes a number of nutritional services. CHHS sponsors a weekly farmers market, open to employees, patients and visitors at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. Wellness Wednesdays feature Dining with a Dietician, where employees may sample healthy recipes. Vending machines feature healthy choices, and all internal meetings include healthy options. The employee picnic also includes healthy choices, in addition to the traditional Wisconsin picnic fare.

COMMUNICATIONS

For Your Benefit is a quarterly online newsletter dedicated to employee health and wellness and benefits and includes articles featuring individual employee experiences, upcoming wellness events, and program results. It is distributed via the company intranet.

WELLNESS ASSESSMENT (HEALTH RISK ASSESSMENT)

Employees must participate annually in the Wellness Assessment to be eligible for the health insurance benefit. This program, managed by Alere¹, consists of an online survey that evaluates employees' health and lifestyle behaviors and provides employees with a confidential written assessment. Biometric tests, while voluntary, are also available to all employees at no cost.

All new employees are given a pre-employment physical, which serves as an initial screening and sets benchmarks for future wellness assessments.

METRICS

The wellness staff closely tracks wellness assessment trends, which clearly indicate that employees' health-improvement efforts are making a difference. Tracking results since 2005, staff found:

- The number of participants with four or more risk factors decreased by 9.2 percent
- The number of smokers decreased by 3 percent
- Dietary fat intake dropped by 14 percent
- Consumption of fruits and vegetables increased 12 percent

DISEASE MANAGEMENT

CHHS offers employees optional comprehensive disease management services through Focused Health Solutions². The Focused Health team has structured a chronic condition management program that serves those most in need of support. This free program is available for health plan members with asthma, diabetes, heart condition and back/neck pain. Copays are covered for participants in this program.

BACKUP CARE

Backup Care is a rather unique service/benefit that provides temporary care for employees' loved ones so employees can continue to work. Eighty hours of care per year are provided with a minimal co-pay. Backup Care consists of temporary or short-term care for loved ones of any age when normal care-giving arrangements

fall through. Backup Care Options³ resolves every type of temporary breakdown in dependent care for any employee.

COORDINATION WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

CHHS is a member of Well City Milwaukee⁴. The Well City USA designation was a concept created in 1991 by the Wellness Council of America⁵, an international non-profit health promotion organization. The Well Workplace/Well City USA initiative challenges local businesses to work together toward building healthier communities, starting in the workplace. Achieving Well City USA designation requires 20 percent of a community's working population must be employed by Well Workplace Award-winning companies. The Well City USA designation is awarded at the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.

CHHS also cooperates with Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital and the Medical College of Wisconsin, all within the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, to sponsor fitness walks and other wellness activities.

IN THE COMMUNITY

The Nutrition, Exercise and Weight Management Kids⁶ program at Children's Hospital is geared toward a holistic treatment of overweight children ages 2-18. It involves a coordinated effort of nurse practitioners, psychologists, dietitians, physical therapists and physicians. The NEW Kids Program services the families and physicians of Wisconsin and beyond in four unique ways: The NEW Kids Clinic, The NEW Kids at the Y, Adolescent Bariatric Surgery and 3-2-1-0 Blast Off to a Healthier Family.

Children's Health Education Center (CHEC)⁷, a member of CHHS, offers dynamic and engaging resources and programs for children, parents, teachers and caregivers to help keep kids healthy and safe. The CHEC provides

teachers with affordable educational resources and opportunities that meet National Health Education Standards including field trips to the center, in-school classroom outreach programs, and online health education programs. New in 2008 was an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Prevention online



program for children in grades 6-8. Another new offering is the innovative "build a healthy lunch box" interactive program.

AWARDS

CHHS was awarded the WELCOA Gold Well Workplace Award in 2007.

SUMMARY

Children's Hospital and Health System has created a culture where employee health is an essential element of their corporate strategies and everyday operations. Their dedicated wellness professionals find creative ways to engage employees, which in turn reduces absenteeism and improves productivity. They also focus efforts on improving the fitness and health of children in the communities they serve with innovative outreach programs. They are truly a model and benchmark for all.

REFERENCES

¹Alere Medical Inc.
<http://www.matria.com>

²Focused Health Solutions, Deerfield, IL
<http://www.focusedhealthsolutions.com>

³Backup Care
Work Options Group
1100 S. McCaslin Blvd. Suite 200
Superior, CO 80027
Phone: (303) 604-6545 or (800) 557-0847
Fax: (303) 604-0535
<http://www.workoptionsgroup.com>

⁴Well City Milwaukee
<http://www.wellcitymilwaukee.org>

⁵Wellness Council of America
www.wellnesscouncilwi.org

⁶NEW Kids
www.chw.org/newkids

⁷Children's Health Education Center
www.bluekids.org

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*View other Wisconsin Business Best Practices Reports at
<http://www.wmc.org/healthcare/index.php>*

Best Practices

WMC's healthcare agenda includes initiatives to encourage employers to take innovative steps to improve the health status of their employees and control their healthcare costs. WMC has identified employers whose healthcare initiatives can serve as best practices for others to use as models for their own initiatives.

Healthcare Best Practices—Common Lessons Learned

WMC has interviewed a number of companies who have taken bold steps to control their healthcare costs and improve the health status of their employees. From those best practices, we have seen a series of common elements or lessons learned. A summary follows:

- *Employees must be engaged in programs to improve their health. Incentives are essential to engaging employees.*
- *Innovative practices come from companies with executives who push the boundaries and drive their employees to seek change.*
- *While cash or tangible incentives sweeten the pot, reduction (or increase!) of the employee's share of health insurance premiums is the most effective strategy.*
- *A broad array of wellness options engages more employees. Flexibility of access during and off of normal working hours increases participation.*
- *Successful programs emphasize improved productivity and cost savings, and often focus on mental, as well as physical, well-being.*
- *Most employers recognize that "doing the right thing" for their employees' health is incentive enough to invest in wellness programs. For those with this philosophy, positive returns on investment follow.*
- *Health Risk Assessments provide the basis for most programs because they immediately engage employees. It is equally important to engage spouses, and to the degree possible, dependents enrolled in family plans, in health assessments and wellness activities.*
- *Consumer-driven plan designs experience slow employee acceptance unless significant incentives or disincentives are provided. Employers must educate and aggressively market the benefits of these plans to employees in order to get participation.*
- *As programs evolve, employers realize the need to dedicate an individual to develop, market, and monitor wellness programs. As programs mature, they need to be integrated, such as the coordination of exercise programs, medication regimens and nutritional guidelines for high-risk employees.*
- *Goals and objectives with appropriate metrics must be clearly stated and communicated to employees. They have to understand why it is important to them and to the company.*
- *Management of chronic/high risk diseases provides the best opportunity for cost savings. The 80/20 rule applies; 80 percent of healthcare costs are spent on 20 percent of the healthcare encounters.*
- *Almost any size company can implement programs to improve wellness and cut costs. The range of options is scalable to company size. Help is out there from companies who have already implemented best practices.*
- *And finally, leading companies are more than willing to share their health care best practices with other companies in their communities.*