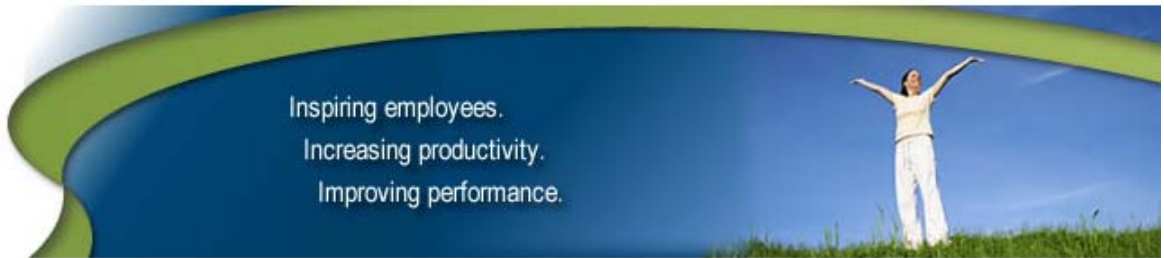




HealthMatters
Wellness with Purpose



Monthly Employer Newsletter March 2009

This Issue:

Employer Tools regarding Stress Management are now available on the *client only* part of our website! If you don't have a login yet, request one from Amanda Moser at amanda.moser@lmcins.com.

Wellness News Happenings

How to Build a Purpose Driven Wellness Program: [Step 2: Creating a Cohesive Wellness Team](#) ([Step 1](#) is in February's issue.)

Featured this month: the first of LMC's 'preferred' Wellness Vendors:

- SimplyWell—**
- Founded by physicians
 - Implementing wellness since 1998
 - Housed in the Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, NE
 - Serving over 200 clients spreading over 50 states & 20 countries

March's Theme: Stress Reduction

This month, on our *client only* portion of our website, you will find the following tools for you to utilize:



• Monthly Employee Newsletter:

✓Poison Prevention Week is March 15-21! Learn how to protect your family from poisons. Also learn the real truth about energy drinks, how to stave off chocolate cravings, and served up this month is a delicious recipe for salmon and salad.

•Monthly Poster:

✓“Reduce Stress”—When employees experience a real or perceived lack of control in their working environment, stress can build and can eventually become too much to bear. Utilize this poster to help guide employees on how to deal with stressors. In addition, don't forget to tap into your Employee Assistance Program for additional stress management tools.

•Monthly Flyer:

✓“Help your Health by Laughing!”—Who doesn't love a good belly laugh? You know the kind that makes your stomach ache? Well, not only is a giggle fun, it is also good for your health and lowering your stress levels!

Only clients of LaMair Mulock Condon Co. are able to access these free monthly resources, as a value-added service. Please contact Amanda Moser at amanda.moser@lmcins.com to be set up with a username and password.

Healthy Happenings

[Obama Tells Nation: 'We Are Not Quitters'](#)

Associated Press Online

President Obama also pledged to root out the waste, fraud and abuse in our Medicare program that doesn't make our seniors any healthier, an apparent reference to the subsidies the government pays to private insurance companies offering an alternative to traditional Medicare under a program long nourished by Republicans.

[More Evidence Links Alcohol, Cancer in Women](#)

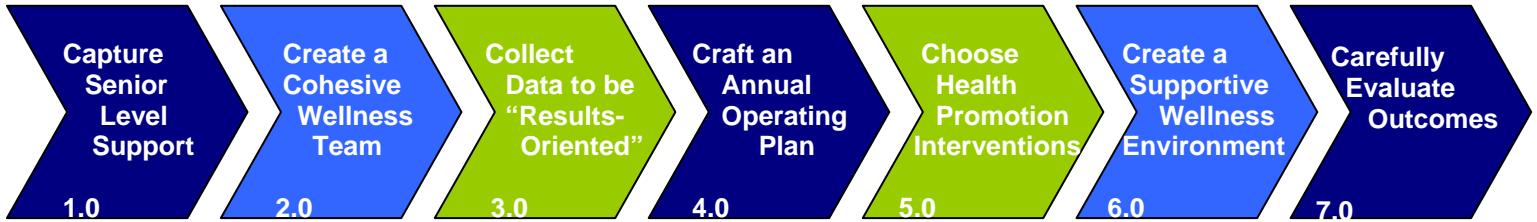
Associated Press Online

A study of nearly 1.3 million British women offers yet more evidence that moderate alcohol consumption increases the risk of a handful of cancers.

For information on wellness news, visit our [HealthMatters](#) website and click on [“Healthy Happenings”](#).

This Month's How To.....

Create A Wellness Team



Once your capture senior level support, the next task is to create a cohesive wellness team. Teams are essential to building great wellness programs because they help to distribute the responsibility for wellness throughout the organization.

So, how hard can it be to form a wellness team? Think a minute. You know you should eat healthier and exercise more, right? But do you always? It's tough to make those changes & it's even harder to change the culture of a business whose main purpose seems to be unrelated to health. In fact, some people will think that health initiatives will hurt productivity. They imagine cubicles filled with relaxed employees taking naps instead of working! So, believe it or not, your organization needs people at different levels of good health, with different viewpoints on how to improve health, and who think differently than you do to help you achieve your goals. In other words, your company needs a team!

ASSEMBLING THE WELLNESS TEAM:

Appointments or Volunteers? It's been debated whether team members should be appointed from the top down, or be volunteers who stand up to be counted. Each has its benefits.

✓**Top-Down Appointments:** When the CEO has charged certain people with the job of promoting wellness, it's a powerful statement that the program is a priority. The team can spend its time on results instead of struggling for support from management. But it's important that members have some genuine interest in health.

✓**Volunteer Members:** It's impressive when busy people volunteer to help their coworkers get healthier and you may find some great talents — a worker who used to teach aerobics, another who quit smoking after the eighth try, someone who has had heart surgery and has learned all about heart-healthy lifestyles. There's a nice feel to volunteer groups, but be sure they include people from different levels and departments — and that they know they'll be accountable for results.

How Should the Group be Lead? Effective teams have solid leadership. The team leader should be someone who understands the company's strategic direction, and the wellness teams' vision of a corporate culture, which will ultimately support everyone's health. In addition, the team leader should be someone who can integrate these two missions and talk about them persuasively to everyone from the newest employee to the CEO. The leader should have a healthy lifestyle, be a good motivator and mentor, be able to work with a diverse group of people and acknowledge and support other's efforts. He or she must be able to handle disputes calmly and reasonably; and, a good leader isn't too shaken by setbacks, uncertainty, or confusion.

How Big Should the Group Be? Depending on the size of your company, 8-15 members is small enough to allow meaningful participation by each person, but large enough to include enough "heads" to generate lots of ideas and provide a variety of skills. Now, having said this, if you are a small business (usually defined as less than 100) it is not necessary to form a large wellness team as they may become cumbersome & impractical in the smaller business setting...2 –3 would be a good number.

How Often Should the Team Meet? Teams will have "peak seasons" when they meet more often to gather data or plan major events. Thus scheduling will need to be flexible, but all teams should meet at least once each quarter.

THE BENEFITS OF A COHESIVE WELLNESS TEAM

✓**Teams Add Credibility and Importance To Your Wellness Programs.** When you're working alone, you may be viewed as "the health nut," or worse yet, "the health Nazi." A group which includes formal and informal leaders from all segments of the business is going to earn the respect of the corporate community and have a far greater "reach" than you can alone.

✓**The Group IQ.** If you've ever been on an effective team — from the high school band to a good marriage to the friend you walk

with at lunch — you know how much power there is in a united team. Together you can think of great ideas, deal with setbacks, and dream up solutions.

✓ **Public Relations.** Group members give the wellness team its human face — literally, in company photographs, newsletters, and events. Members can hand out items such as informational brochures on health topics or coordinate team sports events. In addition, they can conduct surveys and solicit ideas from fellow employees.

✓ **Teams Provide Stability.** If your company's head Health Ranger leaves, you won't have to start from scratch. You'll have experienced team members who can rise to leadership positions. If your business is downsized, the wellness team is less likely to be eliminated than a sole coordinator.

✓ **Teams Lighten the Load and take advantage of individual talents.** Even if you have a full-time person dedicated to your wellness program, it's a lot of work. A team can help prevent burnout. It also allows delegation of tasks to those who are best at each sort of job. Salespeople can work on incentives and motivation; benefits managers can inform you about health costs, etc.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE TEAM?

You want employees from all sectors of the company who can envision how wellness (or the lack of it) affects different aspects of the business. You need people who can think strategically, make realistic plans and anticipate pitfalls — people who know where to look for support and where to anticipate resistance.

You also want a diverse group in terms of health. A smoker can give you realistic feedback on your smoking cessation program. Someone who's overweight and doesn't exercise can "tell it like it is" and help your team understand why some well-meaning plans may not work. And if that person supports your programs, it may inspire others.

Potential wellness team members:

- senior and mid-level managers
- front-line employees
- benefits managers
- union representatives
- human resources personnel
- marketing and communications directors
- safety coordinators
- information systems representatives
- health care representatives



WHAT DOES THE WELLNESS TEAM DO?

The Wellness Team...

Develops, guides, and oversees the company's wellness efforts. Make no mistake — this is hard work. It's no small order to find ways to help employees — people with health problems, family stress, financial worries, and lots of work to do — make changes toward greater health. You have to discover their interests, motivate them to participate in your programs, and keep management enthused about your efforts.

Establishes a vision which drives the team. Great teams know where they're going; they can picture their desired outcome. First identify the current wellness status of the employees by gathering data. How's absenteeism? What is the health insurance claims history? What are employees interested in? What has worked in the past? If possible, gather data from similar companies. That way you can discover if your figures are out of line.

Now it's time to dream a little. Imagine your workplace transformed into a truly healthy environment. This allows you to begin developing a vision for your wellness program.

Decides on Goals. The team is now ready to choose some desired outcomes based on the data the team has gathered. We suggest you move towards ultimate goals in small, achievable steps. Perhaps you want to contain health care costs, decrease absenteeism, improve the level of seat belt use, teach basic nutrition concepts, and get more employees walking regularly. If high turnover is a problem, you may want to use your wellness program to attract and retain employees by offering programs or benefits to their families. However, the goals you choose should be specific to the population at hand, and they should be measurable in terms of outcomes.

Attaches a timeline to each goal. The project may be forgotten if the timeline is too long, or you may create stress and resentment if the timeline is too short. Ask team members for feedback when setting timelines, and check with them to see how projects are doing.

TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR TEAM ON TRACK.

Communicate, Communicate, Communicate. Get across the idea to everyone that this team pulls in health-related data and puts out helpful, human responses. You don't just meet — you gather ideas, brainstorm, plan, implement, and analyze results. Let management know what you're up to by circulating the minutes of meetings, and use memos or E-mail to clue in employees. And just plain talk about what you're doing!

Get a Fast Start. Build momentum and morale by going into action mode right away. Have each member conduct five personal interviews with employees about their health interests and needs, or distribute and collect a company-wide questionnaire. Analyze the results quickly and move on to program planning.

Widen the Circle. Turnover can create gaping holes in your team. Periodically identify "new blood" who could become members. Invite them to meetings or to help out on health promotion events. Allow members who contribute less to be replaced.

Roles and Responsibilities Should be Clear. Everyone should leave meetings with a clear idea of what's expected of them — and when. It's a good idea for the leader to summarize tasks assigned at the end of each meeting.

Remember That the Business of Business is Business. You won't get anywhere pushing ideas that cut into productivity. You and top management have to be on the same side, or you'll lose the support you need to get more wellness into the corporate culture. Be realistic — not too many companies will sponsor naps, but a three-minute stretch break may float. Your team is trying to enhance work life, not replace it with health activities.

It's really not such a stretch to align the interests of management with those of the employees. The truth is good health is in everyone's interest.

Parting Thoughts

Successful, results-oriented wellness programs almost always use a team approach. There's just too much important work to be done for one person — and too many talents and skills in the organization to pass by. The composition of the team is paramount — it must be diverse and enthusiastic. It should be led by someone who truly cares about health — and who has the people skills to manage the group.

The team must develop a vision which grows out of the reality of the current collective health status of the company. Measurable goals, which are achievable in a reasonable time frame, should also be set. In addition, they should communicate well with the top management who nurture them with resources, and with the employees whom they hope to nurture with health-promoting information, activities, and corporate culture.

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Meyer, C., How the Right Measures Help Teams Excel, Harvard Business Review, May/June 1994.
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This month's featured vendor:

SIMPLY Well[®]

The rising cost of health care is a major concern for all employers. A large part of that cost is medical claims related to employee lifestyle choices. LMC has partnered with an exceptional wellness program; SimplyWell.

INTEGRATED
HEALTH SOLUTIONS

Founded by physicians in 1998, the goal of SimplyWell remains the same...to provide the most comprehensive and results-driven health and wellness management program in the market place. SimplyWell provides solutions while empowering your employees with tools to highlight personal health opportunities, emphasizing the importance of preventative care and individual accountability.

SimplyWell is comprehensive and fully measurable while being private, secure and HIPAA compliant. SimplyWell was founded in order to create a healthy work environment for employers as well as employees. Healthier employees lead to a healthier bottom line and by assessing the overall health of your population, SimplyWell is able to provide reporting to the

client so he/she can easily identify and target the areas of cost savings and cost reductions. SimplyWell's average return on investment for their clients is 1:1 in year one and 3:1 in year three.

The advantages of SimplyWell are many:

For the employees:

- ✓Tools that allow people to realize personal health opportunities
- ✓Emphasis on early identification, preventive care and individual accountability
- ✓A supportive, healthy work environment

For the employer:

- ✓Early identification of risk and disease at the population level
- ✓Fully measurable programs
- ✓Private, secure, and HIPAA compliant
- ✓Comprehensive, needs based programs, customized for the organization
- ✓A healthier culture, and more engaged workforce

SimplyWell serves over 200 employers representing banking, manufacturing, medicine, retail, agriculture and higher education. Nearly 80% of recently surveyed participants responded that SimplyWell made them more aware of their health status.

SimplyWell in the news:

SimplyWell was recently selected as one of the 10 examples of case studies that were presented to President Barack Obama as an example of "what works" at the work site in improving health in the United States.

The case study feature was the Greater Omaha Packing Company, Inc. (GOP) out of Lincoln, Nebraska. GOP has annual sales of nearly \$1 billion and is ranked fifth in beef processing nationally. Since implementing SimplyWell in 2001, GOP has experienced significant improvement in employee engagement as well as measurable clinical improvement. Currently, nearly 90 percent of GOP's employees elected to participate in SimplyWell in exchange for a comprehensive group medical insurance program.

Repeat participants over the past five years have experienced a 27% improvement in normal blood pressure readings while 16.7% fewer participants have elevated total cholesterol and 41.3% participants have decreased elevated glucose levels. Since 2001 this group has experienced an average health care cost increase of only 2.4%, far below the national average. As part of their future health improvement plans, GOP is opening an onsite clinic staffed with qualified medical professionals to continue this successful program. [Please click here to read the full article](#)

Program Features:

- A turnkey program. All components are in place and ready to implement.
- Comprehensive and professionally staffed on-site health screen at your locations.
- Integration of a participant's Health Risk Questionnaire and biometrics.
- Online personal health record for each participant.
- Extensive real time reporting for both the group and participant. Each individual receives a customized health report and action plan.
- Healthy lifestyle coaching to help participants reduce health risks and stay engaged with their action plan.
- Includes a 24-Hour nurse call line.
- Extensive online decision support tools and educational resources.
- Point-based incentive structure that can be tied to the benefit plan.
- Marketing education support tools throughout the program.
- Customizable communication tools to encourage participation.
- Secure password access.
- Secure, Private and HIPAA compliant.
- Account Management team led by Master's Degree prepared health professionals.

To learn more about SimplyWell, either contact Amanda Moser at amanda.moser@lmcins.com, or give them a call at 877-991-WELL and we will schedule an appointment to meet with you.

SimplyWell would be a great addition to your employee benefit programs!

Meet the SimplyWell team!



Dr. James T. Canedy:
Founder & President



Mike Demman, J.D.:
CEO



Michelle Baade:
VP of Business
Development



Nina Clark:
Director of Business
Development



Elaine Murphy, R.N.:
Director of Account
Services