



Spotlight on REX Healthcare

120-year-old hospital system models good health for the community

Hospitals and health systems, as large employers, are feeling the burden of rising healthcare costs. In fact, hospital employee use of plan services is greater than that of the average U.S. employee. Hospital workers, on average, have higher utilization rates and carry a higher burden of chronic illness than employees in other market segments.*

When Rex Healthcare, a 120-year-old hospital system in Raleigh, North Carolina with 5,600 employees, embarked on its wellness program, being a role model in the healthcare industry was a major priority. A year later, 77% of Rex employees have participated in a Vitality activity, and engagement continues to grow.

Vitality spoke with Jill Radding, Manager, Benefits & Compensation, about their program and to find the keys to their success.

What made you pursue a wellness program?

Rex has been focused on wellness for a long time. It was important for Rex as a healthcare provider to be a model for good health in the community. That was first and foremost for us.

Secondly, we wanted to create a positive influence on the health of our co-workers. Healthcare providers are very good at taking care of others, but not as good at taking care of themselves. We wanted to

give our co-workers an opportunity to focus on their own health. Another reason to pursue a wellness program was to impact our healthcare plan costs in a positive way. We began our wellness initiative five or six years ago with a Health Risk Assessment and a focus on awareness. Our next step was to encourage coworkers to focus on prevention by participating yearly in two preventive screenings.

What was the approach taken when you rolled out the Vitality program?

We rolled out the Vitality program so that it coincided with our open enrollment period. We included a section in a mailing to homes announcing Vitality and we also shared introductory information during benefit fairs. Then we began to publicize the program via co-worker e-blasts. Also, when our Vitality Wellness Strategy Manager conducted an on-site meeting, we videotaped the meeting, posted it on our website and promoted the video via email. We also used electronic signage to drive co-workers to the Vitality website. We did everything possible to get the word out and to get people excited.

*According to a Truven Health Analytics study looking at the health risks of 740,000 hospital workers.



I personally love Vitality! It has motivated me to become more physically active and focused on my overall health."

Is your leadership engaged?

Absolutely! The most competitive person in the program is our CFO. Our senior leadership team members wear Fitbits and track their steps. They are working out, eating right, and are true champions of the program.

What are some of the innovative ways you create a culture of wellness with Vitality?

We have an excellent cafeteria with professionally trained chefs. Our chef takes recipes from the Vitality website and prepares them in the cafeteria. They have names like, "Vitality salad" and "Vitality breakfast cereal." We have created a Vitality punch card and when co-workers buy one of the Vitality meals, they get a punch on their punch card. When the co-worker fills up their card, they receive 35 employer-sponsored Vitality Points.

What results are you most proud of?

I am the most proud of the increase in physical activity in our group. We have walking trails around the hospital, and now I see folks walking. Co-workers are wearing Fitbits or other devices and tracking their steps. Departments are challenging each other. Our outpatient pharmacy competes against the inpatient pharmacy to see which can get the most steps each month. Small prizes are given, but it is mostly about bragging rights!

What's been your greatest challenge?

We've had two challenges. The first was the resistance to change from the old program, which is completely normal. The other has been technology. While most co-workers love the Vitality Today app, the website and the linking of the fitness devices, there are some people who don't have a smartphone or Fitbit. Technology isn't for everyone, and finding ways to get those folks on board, earning their points and getting engaged has been our biggest challenge.

