



# The Senior Leadership Effect

Interview with Signature Healthcare  
CEO Kim Hollon

Testimonial

Vitality®

# Introduction



Last August, Signature Healthcare hosted “Wellness Week” for their employee population to highlight how wellness can be social, fun and engaging. In the past, employees did not understand the importance of Signature Healthcare’s wellness goals. But this year was different. This year, engagement in the event increased substantially and positive feedback was received.

So, where did the change begin? It started at the top. Signature Healthcare’s CEO, Kim Hollon, went the extra mile to ensure his management team bought into wellness. He added it to the long-term list of management’s strategic goals, and emphasized the continued importance of healthy populations in today’s workplace. The push from leadership, coupled with the support of 50+ Vitality Champs®, led to a sharp increase in members achieving Gold Vitality Status®.

Vitality caught up with Signature Healthcare’s CEO to discuss his feelings on becoming the face of their Wellness program and his future goals for workforce wellness.



“I learned today that wellness is not a body type, not a number on a scale, not the flexibility of your muscles, and not the food that you eat. It is more than that; it is a community membership that has yourself as an important member of that community. It’s a community with a set of values, with a vision, with the goal of sharing the joy of being well. Thanks for this eye-opening experience during Wellness Week at Signature Healthcare.”

- Annette Diaz in Pharmacy at Signature Healthcare

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## You were relatively close to the selection process. What made you pick Vitality over other vendors?

Vitality is the third vendor we’ve used. The first two vendors lasted only one or two years.

What Vitality offers is the engagement over the entire year. The layered effect of trying to get diet, exercise and education into point values and feedback yearlong should be at the heart of wellness. They help us with behavior change and consistency in community. Vitality also does a nice job with Vitality Bucks® and the connectivity of devices - you make it easy to connect and earn Vitality Points™ with frequent pats on the back. These are the strengths of the platform. The Vitality Health Review™ is easy to fill out which I think is equally important. There’s also the flexibility to go to your own doctor or internally or through a partner - and I’ve done all three to see what employees experience—I think that trying to meet people where

they are is important. Being able to turn your Vitality Points into a way to “make money” is great. Earning grocery points through the HealthyFood program, for the folks doing it to save money, it impacts what they buy.

I participate in many of Signature Healthcare’s initiatives, because if I’m going to be a champion of the program, I have to use it. I’m also pleased my wife uses the program.

For us, internally, each department has the flexibility to figure out what it does around wellness, communications and engagement each month. We encourage people to be creative across the organization, and Vitality allows for that flexibility.

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## What was your health culture before initiating a wellness program with Vitality?

Before Vitality was in place, we didn't have good information about what percentage of employees were using the wellness platform and were engaged in change. Employees may have been engaged and working on wellness, but we didn't have the management system to look at that. The wellness culture was one where leadership and human resources pushed info at employees but we didn't have other parts of the organization accept it or have

groups of employees actively supporting each other to change. I didn't see as many devices or people walking. Now, on nice days, it's more common for me to see people walking the campuses than ever before. I think that's a result of pushing for wellness over time. Everything we read about - getting up from your desk and walking, or having small walking breaks - is important to health and wellness.

## What steps have you taken as CEO to motivate other levels of management to encourage the program?

When we first started our wellness initiative, the organization generally relied on human resources and our wellness department to lead the effort. Many managers, including members of our senior team, believed managers did not have a role in encouraging wellness. So, as a senior leadership group we studied a number of published articles and white papers on organizations that successfully implemented wellness initiatives. We learned about their improvements in presenteeism, improvements in overall employee health, reductions in health insurance and work compensation insurance costs, and the central role of leadership in their wellness transformations. We also learned about the value of peer-to-peer support within each work group. Senior leaders reviewed their findings with the whole team, discussing what they learned and what core elements were required for a successful implementation. As a team, we clearly saw the need for strong senior leader and middle manager support for a culture of wellness where a significant number of employees are successful with lifestyle change. They realized they were not alone in this journey.

As a result of self-study, the senior team cascaded a wellness goal that all departments would be engaged each week in some wellness activity that supported our corporate goal of having 36 percent of our employees attain the platinum or gold level status within Vitality. We wanted each department to decide what they were interested in, whether it was a water challenge, stair challenge or healthy-recipe-sharing challenge. The flexibility of Vitality gives us a platform that allows the departments and wellness champs to design their own engagement strategy to generate "points" for the engaged employee. The easier we can make it to engage, and the more we can do as an organization to spread best practices, the more change we have seen.

During our daily department huddles, the employees discuss our goals and activities toward wellness attainment. With wellness as a corporate goal, that means we are discussing wellness and the engagement of the team 52 times a year. We can use this time to share what other departments are doing; update them on corporate initiatives or get the team's feedback on local initiatives. In some areas, teams also use this time to encourage each other with their lifestyle changes.

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## What are your goals for the coming year?

Our goal for the upcoming year is to increase the percentage of employees reaching Gold Vitality Status. We're also expanding our personal coaching through TrestleTree. Coaching is being provided for people in the pre-commitment phase of change who might be ready to engage through coaching. (We are currently

missing this population). Vitality is great for self-starters or peer motivation, but sometimes we need to go the extra-mile to meet people where they are. I'm hoping we get them hooked with coaching to engage them with wellness in the long term.

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"We saw the need and value for senior and middle management commitment, and in all the articles we read, those two things were important components for success. That finally got them realizing, 'OK, we're not alone;' other organizations are doing this and realized the need, so we finally adopted it as a goal."

- Kim Hollon, CEO at Signature Healthcare

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