



The Alliance

Corporate Office: Madison | **Employees:** 32
Employees Participating in Wellness Program: 32
Success Story: Overall Wellness Program

Program Highlights

The Alliance invests in an employee wellness program designed to create a culture of health at the workplace and to offer employees access to the tools they need to live well outside of work. When first challenged with the goal of creating a wellness program that would promote healthy living for Alliance employees, The Alliance wellness team decided that a strong focus on worksite culture should take the place of the more traditional points-based programs.

With this focus in mind, The Alliance implemented a three-step process (biometrics, health risk assessment, coaching) that earns employees a \$425 wellness benefit to be used toward a comprehensive list of wellness-related products and services. The organization also offers healthy food options at reduced prices in the staff café (maintained by the wellness team). Employees enjoy a variety of healthy living magazines while eating in the staff café. In addition, the organization has increased communication about the flexible work schedules that employees can enjoy and about the onsite exercise classes, fitness center, shower facilities, and bike racks.

Program Success

For years The Alliance offered various wellness activities such as onsite exercise classes, flu shots, a wellness reimbursement benefit, and health risk assessments, but there was not a concerted effort to encourage participation or develop a structured program. In 2010, The Alliance wellness team was challenged with the task of increasing participation while creating a structured program.

Without extra budget dollars, the team had to be creative. The team decided to take a currently popular benefit, the wellness reimbursement benefit, and implement a new requirement for program eligibility. Employees would now be asked to complete biometric testing, a health risk assessment, and one coaching call in order to maintain their eligibility for the wellness reimbursement benefit. Initially the plan was met with some skepticism as employees simply did not want to lose this benefit that they valued so highly. As of now, though, after two years of the program in place, The Alliance has enjoyed 100 percent participation.

Overcoming Challenges

Adding a new requirement to maintain eligibility for a benefit that was previously offered to employees without strings can be a challenge. Overcoming this challenge relied on proper communication with the employees. The wellness team focused the message on the broader benefit program, how it supports employees, and the minimal amount of effort required from employees to maintain their eligibility for the \$425.



Employees of The Alliance get active during a ping-pong game.

Wellness Program Components

- Employees who complete an annual health screening panel, health risk assessment, and coaching session receive a \$425 wellness benefit.
- Employees can enjoy healthy snacks and meals in the staff café at a low price.
- Flexible work schedules allow employees the freedom to manage their hours to best fit their work/life balance.
- Onsite exercise classes are offered over the lunch hour and a newly opened campus workout facility is available free-of-charge to all staff.
- The organization celebrates Employee Health and Fitness Month (May) with a variety of activities for employees, including chair massages, wellness speakers, and other challenges and events.

“As an employer-owned cooperative, our ability to serve our members relies on attracting and retaining talented, productive employees. Even though we are a small employer, there are lots of simple, low-cost ways to invest in the health and well-being of our employees and their families.”

- Cheryl DeMars, President and CEO