



Group Health Cooperative

of South Central Wisconsin

Corporate Office: Madison | **Employees:** 600

Employees Participating in Wellness Program: Variable

Success Story: Holiday Weight Challenge

Program Highlights

The Holiday Weight Challenge is an annual component of Group Health Cooperative's (GHC) wellness program that involves a weigh-in on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and a weigh-out during the second week of January. The goal of each participant is to maintain, lose, or gain no more than 2% of the weigh-in weight. Employees receive a \$15 incentive that is redeemable for Internet shopping points or as a donation to a local food pantry. Information on nutrition and recipes endorsed by GHC's clinical dietitians are posted on the Working Well webpages.

Program Success

Between 90 and 100 percent of the employees who commit to weighing in complete the challenge with a successful weigh-out. As an annual campaign, employees use it as a check point to make sure they maintain their weight over the holidays.

Personal testimonies emphasize the program's success. One employee, for example, stated that "when I weighed in, I realized I needed to lose weight even before the holiday parties started. I succeeded in this challenge."

Part of the formula for success of the Holiday Weight Challenge is that it does not require significant effort to manage once the logistics are established. The program can be incredibly cost effective, and it lends itself to individual or team participation. Repeating the program annually is key to helping many staff think twice about their holiday eating and activity plans.

Overcoming Challenges

GHC finds that communicating the current year's program details and coordinating resources is their primary challenge. However, this process has become more routine due to the consistency in personnel involved at each location. Because the Holiday Weight Challenge is a multisite program that is scheduled simultaneously at eight clinics and office buildings, it requires the time and attention of the wellness team site captains.

Wellness Program Components

- "Working Well" is an employee-driven initiative with the support of senior management.
- A committee represents each GHC location and works on events, programs, and general wellness.
- Event and programs are largely individual in focus, but are becoming more team-oriented.

"I love participating in the Holiday Weight Challenge because it not only provides me with a personal goal, but by doing it with my co-workers, it provides all of us the social support we need to be successful."

- Debra Lafler, Worksite Wellness Coordinator