

The Madison Region  
Healthcare Leadership Collaborative's

# Working for Health

Success Stories



*A workforce wellness initiative of Thrive and the  
Madison Region's Healthcare Leadership Collaborative*

working [for] health 

## About the Healthcare Leadership Collaborative

The Healthcare Leadership Collaborative (HLC) is comprised of healthcare industry executives from across the Madison Region. Convened by Thrive, this CEO roundtable explores opportunities to advance the region's healthcare sector.

### Members

Beaver Dam Community Hospital  
Black River Memorial Hospital  
Columbus Community Hospital  
Dean Health Plan  
Dean Clinic  
Divine Savior Healthcare  
Edgerton Hospital  
Fort HealthCare  
Grant Regional Health Center  
Group Health Cooperative of South Central WI  
Home Health United  
Hospice Care  
Mercy Health System/MercyCare Health Plans  
Meriter Health Services  
Physicians Plus Insurance Corporation  
Reedsburg Area Medical Center  
Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative  
St. Clare Hospital and Health Services  
St. Mary's Dean Ventures  
St. Mary's Hospital  
St. Mary's Janesville Hospital  
The Alliance  
The Monroe Clinic  
Unity Health Plan  
Upland Hills Health  
UW Health Partners Watertown Regional Medical Center  
UW Hospitals & Clinics/UW Health  
UW Medical Foundation

## About Thrive

Thrive is the economic development partnership for the eight-county Madison Region, created to grow the region's economy in ways that preserve and enhance quality of life. We see value in initiatives that focus on long-term, sustained results, aimed at building the region's competitive advantage.

For more information about Thrive and the HLC, visit our website at [www.thrivehere.org](http://www.thrivehere.org) or contact us at 608.443.1960 or [info@thrivehere.org](mailto:info@thrivehere.org)

# Leading by Example

Improving Workforce Wellness from  
within the Healthcare Industry



Healthcare in the Madison Region is a strong driver of both the economy and quality of life. It creates employment opportunities, while providing the region's population with well-coordinated systems that cover a spectrum of unparalleled care. Since 2007, Thrive has convened healthcare industry executives as part of the Healthcare Leadership Collaborative (HLC), a CEO roundtable exploring opportunities to advance the region's healthcare sector.

Over the past few years, HLC members have adopted the challenge of leading by example in the area of workforce wellness programs.

**Healthcare leaders envision healthier workplaces as a regional competitive advantage, driving down healthcare costs for area employers and increasing employee engagement and productivity.**

Formal wellness programs have been shown to provide a return on investment of \$3:\$1 for businesses through lower healthcare costs and reduced absenteeism<sup>1</sup>.

To target workforce wellness, the HLC collaborated with Thrive to introduce the Working for Health initiative. The long-term goal of this program is to improve the region's activity level, nutrition, tobacco use, alcohol use, and weight by increasing the number

of and participation in employee wellness programs across the region—including within the healthcare industry itself.

In 2010, the HLC completed an important phase of this initiative, which focused on the enhancement of wellness programs within healthcare organizations. These organizations shared best practices for strengthening their programs and increasing employee participation, while tracking results through Health Risk Assessments (HRA).

Based on its learning and successes, the HLC now turns its attention to the broader employer base of the region. With the introduction of Workforce Wellness Week in May 2011, Thrive and the region's healthcare leaders hope to inspire a long-term commitment among employers to prioritize employee health.

In an effort to lead by example and encourage broad adoption of workforce wellness, members of the region's healthcare industry share their stories here. As these stories reveal, wellness programs can take on a wide variety of opportunities and offerings, but their goal remains the same—prioritizing employee health and integrating wellness into the workplace.

<sup>1</sup> Wellness Council of America



# Black River Memorial Hospital

**Corporate Office:** Black River Falls | **Employees:** 280

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 237 (of 260 employees in 2010)

**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

## Program Highlights

Black River Memorial Hospital (BRMH) is dedicated to exceptional care—and committed to the health and wellness of its workforce. This includes health of the body, mind, family, and surrounding environment. Aspects of the wellness program include a “Living Right” publication, released monthly to all departments, and a Wellness Works Employee Education Board. Employees are also educated through an annual employee health fair and quarterly worksite wellness education forums. BRMH’s Wellness Works program includes a Holiday Weight Challenge, American Cancer Society Finish Line Walk, monthly appointments on a body composition scale, consultations with dietitians and personal trainers, and the Grow an Extra Row Farmer’s Market during the summer. A dedicated wellness committee oversees these programs and helps administer feedback surveys and evaluation methods.

## Program Success

Increased employee participation in the HRAs since 2007 reflects success in BRMH’s wellness program. The organization benchmarks its HRA results against overall Healics® averages. The organization also conducts an annual employee wellness survey to gather effectiveness and satisfaction rates. An Employee Health Nurse monitors absenteeism rates, illness and injury occurrences, workers’ compensation claims, and vaccination rates.

BRMH’s wellness program was notably recognized in 2010 as a gold level winner of the Governor’s Worksite Wellness Award, which honors employers who encourage their employees to improve their own health and well-being. BRMH is one of just 10 businesses in Wisconsin that has been named a gold level winner since 2008. Applications are evaluated on criteria such as program infrastructure, health education, health screening and disease prevention and management, physical activity and nutrition components, tobacco-use policies, and alcohol and other drug policies.

## Overcoming Challenges

BRMH addressed funding challenges by keeping spending to a minimum and seeking outside business donations to use as incentives. To overcome scheduling concerns, BRMH taped wellness programs so that they would be available to those unable to attend in person. Finally, BRMH lessened complaints about paperwork by revising participant forms to lighten the amount of tracking necessary.

*BRMH employees Holly Winn, Melissa Bergerson, Liz Lund, and Robert Daley receiving the Governor’s Worksite Wellness Award.*

## Wellness Program Components

- Program focuses on four key areas of prevention, stress management, activity, and nutrition.
- Employees opt in to the voluntary program, which provides quarterly activities that include educational programs activities and challenges in each area.
- Health Risk Assessments are offered annually.
- Community programs, events, and discounts are promoted and offered to all employees.

**“We’re looking for a healthy employee—one who enjoys life. Our interest is in their physical well-being as well as their work environment.”**

*- Stan Gaynor, President and Chief Executive Officer*



# 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*



# Dean Health Plan

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 520

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** All (in some aspect of program)

**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

## Program Highlights

Dean Health Plan (DHP) focused on creating a comprehensive program that balanced participation and results in an effort to engage employees and create a positive culture, while also addressing the health risks affecting employees through intentional and well-planned interventions and initiatives. DHP began with a mission “to enhance employees’ health and well-being by creating an environment that supports healthful lifestyle choices and providing opportunities, tools, and resources to help employees become full partners in managing their health.”

One of DHP’s greatest successes has been the semiannual Wellness Week, when life at the organization truly revolves around wellness. A wide range of activities and exercise classes are offered, vendors visit to demonstrate their wellness products and services, information and presentations are offered to educate employees, and company-wide events and competitions—such as obstacle courses and kickball tournaments—encourage a collaborative team approach to wellness. Activities during the week are offered free-of-charge and during normal business hours, to make participation easy.

## Program Success

DHP’s thorough planning and ongoing evaluation has been key to the success of the program. DHP’s wellness program was built upon a strong foundation that includes visible senior level support through communication and regular participation. A cohesive, dedicated wellness team comprised of employees from all divisions and levels plays key roles as both wellness advocates and active participants. The regular and comprehensive collection of data—both biometric screenings and interest surveys—has greatly contributed to the program’s success. Finally, a plan for ongoing evaluation of both individual interventions and the overall program ensures the long-term growth of the program. Three years after the start of DHP’s wellness program, their efforts and success were recognized with a Gold Well Workplace award from the Wellness Council of America.



*Dean Health Plan Vice Presidents taking on the obstacle course during Winter Wellness Week.*

## Wellness Program Components

- Annual HRA and onsite biometric screening, with connection to health insurance benefits.
- Health coaching.
- Wide range of activities offered onsite and/or during work hours, such as semiannual Wellness Weeks, fitness classes, CSA program, twice weekly executive-led walks, onsite Weight Watchers, and daily salad bar in cafeteria.

**“I understand the value of healthy employees and believe our employees are our most valuable asset. At DHP we believe that investing in an Employee Health and Wellness Program is a win-win opportunity, and it is the right thing; it is an investment that improves the health of our employees and the health of the company. I am very proud of our Employee Health and Wellness program, and I am very proud of our employees for embracing this initiative.”**

*- Lon Sprecher, President and Chief Executive Officer*



# Divine Savior Healthcare

**Corporate Office:** Portage | **Employees:** 704

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 345 (of 606 benefits-eligible employees)

**Success Story:** Employee Impact

## Employee Success

Divine Savior's EASY Employee Wellness Program provides a variety of weight control tools for participants. One of these tools, the Weight Watchers at Work program, has proven valuable for many employees, including Barb Hunt, a clinic coding coordinator in the medical records department. Barb, who has battled weight all her life, found little excuse not to attend the weigh-ins or meetings because they were conveniently located at her workplace. The wellness program's activities increased her motivation as she participated in events such as the Divine Savior Pedometer Challenge and Holiday Weight Loss Team Challenge. Barb has lost 110.4 pounds over the past four years through the combination of Weight Watchers and the wellness program, and no longer suffers from sleep apnea or back pain. As Barb reflects on the program, she says that "the EASY Wellness Program saved my life. It is an awesome benefit provided by our organization. It shows that Divine Savior cares about our health and is willing to do what it can to provide support."

## Program Success

Barb's story provides just one example of both the quantitative and the human side of success of Divine Savior's wellness program. The company's ability to achieve a cumulative HRA score of 77.4 in three years compared to the Midland Health's national average of 70.3 demonstrates how progressive improvement in overall health can be attained with continued wellness programming. In addition to the important result of healthier employees, Divine Savior also boasts employees who are committed to Divine Savior because of the organization's demonstrated care for them as individuals.

## Overcoming Challenges

Divine Savior's main challenge has been keeping the wellness program interesting and motivating. To address this, the education department held a Wellness Summit to brainstorm new ideas that are being planned for implementation between now and 2013.

*Divine Savior employees receive wellness points for participating in Downtown Portage's Annual Run-Walk.*

## Wellness Program Components

- Benefits-eligible employees may participate in the EASY (Employee Activities to Strengthen Yourself) wellness program that involves health testing and measurements along with cash incentives for achieving results.
- Health testing includes Midland Health's Health Risk Assessment, blood tests for cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar, measurement of height, weight and blood pressure, and determination of tobacco use.
- Employees must provide evidence of completing at least four of seven health prevention activities.
- Employees who are not benefits-eligible may participate in a broader wellness program that includes fun, informative, and healthy activities that offer points toward winning other prizes.

**Divine Savior is cultivating a culture of wellness at work that supports both the employees and employer for a win-win result.**



# Edgerton Hospital

## and Health Services

**Corporate Office:** Edgerton | **Employees:** 160

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 80

**Success Story:** Skyscraper Challenge

### Program Highlights

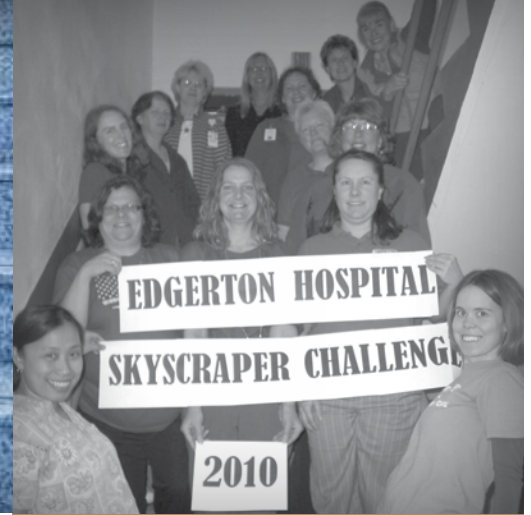
The Edgerton Hospital and Health Services Skyscraper Challenge was a six-week program encouraging employees to take the stairs. The goals of this challenge were to provide employees with the physical benefits of added exercise while freeing up elevators for patients and community members. Employees were challenged to climb the equivalent number of flights in each of 11 towers (i.e., John Hancock Center, Empire State Building, Sears Tower). Cards were developed for each tower, and as an employee completed a tower, they received a card with the next tower to complete. To receive a wellness point, employees had to complete six towers within six weeks. This challenge will be repeated in 2011, with the addition of a team competition.

### Program Success

With more than half of Edgerton's employees participating, the program was a great success. Forty-two employees completed the required six towers to receive a wellness point. Together, the participating employees climbed a total of 26,602 flights of stairs or 532,040 steps. Employees were able to participate anytime, taking the stairs on their breaks and over lunch. Some employees even stayed after their shifts were over to walk the stairs.

### Overcoming Challenges

To ensure success at locations that do not have many stairs, Edgerton allowed employees to complete their flights of stairs at home or out in the community, making the program even easier to take part in.



*Employees participate in Edgerton Hospital's Skyscraper Challenge.*

## Wellness Program Components

- An 11-person committee from various departments in the hospital facilitates the employee wellness program.
- Employees who subscribe to the hospital's health insurance receive a health reimbursement account if they complete a Health Risk Assessment and five wellness activities throughout the year.
- Employees who are not part of the health plan are also encouraged to participate, receiving small monetary incentives for different levels of participation.
- Wellness program offerings include monthly lunch n' learns, two challenges throughout the year, and an employee health and fitness day walk.

**The Edgerton Hospital and Health Services employee wellness committee's mission is to provide employees with the resources and tools necessary to achieve optimal wellness, and to create a culture that supports healthy lifestyles. Our goal is to implement programs and policies which foster physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual well-being.**





# St. Mary's Hospital

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 2,700

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 1,400

**Success Story:** Get Fresh, Get Local Program and Center for Wellness

## Get Fresh, Get Local Program Components

- The program provides healthy eating options at the cafeteria, as well as through employee access to a Community-Supported Agriculture program.
- The Food & Nutrition Department helps plan the program and responds to customer requests.

## Program Highlights

Three years ago, St. Mary's decided to invest in farm-fresh ingredients from local suppliers that yield higher vitamin potency, better taste, and greater nutritional value than traditional processed foods. Area suppliers offer in-season local produce and other Wisconsin-produced food items. In 2010, about 16 percent of St. Mary's total cafeteria food spending was from local suppliers. St. Mary's newest initiative is a hospital-sponsored Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which employees can buy shares and receive weekly shipments of fresh produce.

## Program Success

The Get Fresh, Get Local program is popular by virtue of the health and taste benefits that are being demanded by consumers, but St. Mary's has also led the effort to promote its success. Featured local foods carry a Get Fresh, Get Local label, and sales of these items outperform similar items without the label. Over the past three years St. Mary's has seen a 300 percent increase in the number of ears of corn it sells each week. St. Mary's is garnering recognition for being at the forefront of acute-care hospitals in the area by taking this approach to food.

## Overcoming Challenges

The program required St. Mary's to use resources wisely and to allocate appropriate employee time to the preparation of local produce. In addition, St. Mary's had to find a farm with insurance and high accountability for on-time delivery.

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**“From the perspective of family medicine physicians, we believe in and promote lifestyle choices that encourage health and well-being, preferable to treating chronic diseases that develop from poor dietary choices and inactivity. Through the CSA program and the many cafeteria initiatives to promote local produce, St. Mary's is supporting and encouraging healthy choices.”**

- Dr. Anne Kolan, family medicine resident at St. Mary's

*St. Mary's new Center for Wellness, open to both rehabilitation patients and employees.*

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## Center for Wellness Program Components

- An 11-member Employee Wellness Committee meets monthly and plans activities and events.
- All employees are encouraged to participate in the free employee exercise program at the Center for Wellness.
- A rehabilitation staff member provides an orientation and safety lesson to every employee who wishes to use the Center.

## Program Highlights

Created in 2008 as part of a new patient wing, the Center for Wellness operates first as a rehabilitation center for cardiac and pulmonary patients and second as an employee exercise area. Patients and employees exercise side by side, an added wellness perk for employees who get to know patients outside of their immediate work. The center includes 35 exercise machines, as well as free weights, exercise balls, and a walking track.

## Program Success

Because the Center for Wellness uses existing patient resources, better facilities and improved access benefit employees. On average, 40 employees use the center for Wellness each day, though more than 50 employees use the center during colder months. Employees report that the free admission and convenience of hours and location are major motivators in their participation, and that without the Center they might get little exercise at all.

## Overcoming Challenges

To increase awareness of the Center for Wellness, St. Mary's includes information in new employee orientation packets and fringe benefit lists, and runs reminders in staff announcements.

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# Home Health United

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 492

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 125

**Success Story:** Employee Impact

## Employee Success

Home Health United's (HHU) wellness program includes a walking program that has encouraged many employees to be more active. The program started by requiring participating employees to maintain a walking log for eight weeks. All employees who walked a minimum of two days per week totaling at least 60 minutes per week for the entire period were entered into a drawing for prizes. One participating employee, Nancy Hoenisch, now walks during every break and at lunch. She began slowly on her 1.5 mile routine, but has now cut her time in half by increasing her pace. In addition, Nancy performs exercises at her desk that she learned from HHU's Ergonomic Specialist.

Another employee, Anita Fernandez, decided to change her lifestyle after experiencing what appeared to be heart attack symptoms. She joined HHU's employee walking program and immediately felt encouraged and motivated by co-workers who were also taking up the challenge.

## Program Success

Both Nancy and Anita have lost weight since committing to HHU's walking program and report a decrease in negative symptoms accompanied by improved stamina and better sleeping. Anita now encourages her co-workers to follow her example and take steps to get healthy. Many employees like Anita and Nancy have committed to reaching health goals and staying active in HHU's wellness program.

## Overcoming Challenges

HHU faced a number of challenges when implementing wellness programs, including the fact that the organization has multiple locations and the majority of its workforce travels. The HHU wellness committee is dedicated to creating programs that are considerate of employee needs, and therefore began its walking program with attainable goals, regardless of fitness level. The committee started slowly, constantly evaluating employee response and participation. Because they received such positive response, the committee will be building on last year's success.

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## Wellness Program Components

- Wellness program includes a walking program and healthy vending options.
  - Campus has been tobacco free since January 1, 2011.
  - Employees receive wellness education through brown bag lunch events and monthly newsletter articles.
  - Employees complete Health Risk Assessments.
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**“Those of us who work in cubicles need to get out mentally and physically. HHU's walking program serves this need and is convenient because it is available at work and is free.”**

*– Nancy Hoenisch, Home Health United Employee*

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# Physicians Plus

## Insurance Corporation

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 130

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 100

**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

### Program Highlights

To meet the varied needs of employees, Physician's Plus offers a multitude of activities, including eight-week behavior change programs that encourage participants to take the stairs, eat fruits and veggies, and drink more water. The wellness program also features team challenges, lunch and learn sessions, on-site fitness classes, and online coaching sessions.

### Employee Success

James Kloth, a pharmacist at Physicians Plus, set a goal to lose weight. Through his participation in wellness activities at Physicians Plus, as well as through personal choices to work with an exercise trainer and follow a nutrition plan, James lost 45 pounds in four months. James attributes much of his success to support he received from co-workers who provided encouragement and advice during the most challenging times. Being able to talk about issues and discuss best practices was essential to helping him stay on track to reach his goal.

### Program Success

Since 2008, Physicians Plus has steadily increased participation in all of its wellness initiatives. In addition to the increased participation, they have had multiple employees make changes that have improved their overall quality of life. Annual employee surveys reveal a high satisfaction with the program offerings.

With the help of the wellness team, senior executives, advisory board, and engaged employees, Physicians Plus received a Gold Well Workplace award from the Wellness Council of America in 2010. While Physicians Plus was honored to receive the award, they felt it was even more rewarding to see that their wellness team created a strong and visible culture of wellness within the organization.

### Overcoming Challenges

Physicians Plus faces the ongoing challenge of getting more people to engage in their worksite wellness activities. Offering a variety of programs and valuable incentives has helped the organization increase engagement and improve satisfaction.

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## Wellness Program Components

- MOVE Team (Motivating Our Valuable Employees) creates a supportive environment for improving wellness.
- Employees complete annual online health assessment, biometric screening, or physical exam.
- Points are given for participation in activities related to healthy eating and weight management, work/life balance, stress management, medical self-care, and tobacco-free living.
- Employees can earn cash incentives for completing designated wellness activities.

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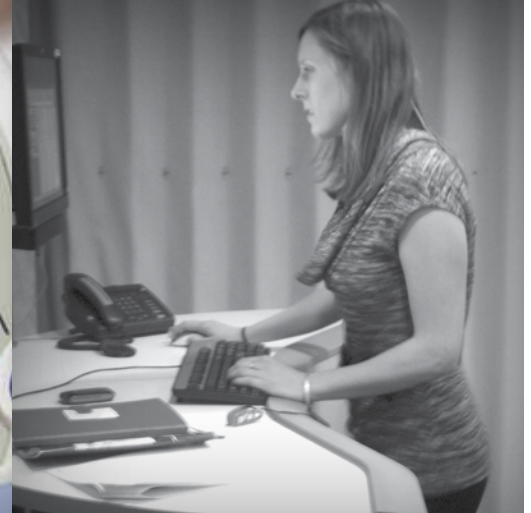
**“Choice matters. To make a wellness program truly employee driven, there must be a full menu of options, enticing incentives, and a consistent message to get them involved. Finally, buy in from management, both philosophically and through investment of company resources, along with dedicated internal staff members that develop, implement and evaluate the program, is critical for success.”**

*- Marcia Hladilek, Director of Health Improvement*

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# Monroe Clinic



**Corporate Office:** Monroe | **Employees:** 1,100  
**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 1,082 HRAs completed (includes spouses/partners)  
**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

## Program Highlights

In the past, Monroe Clinic's wellness program required each employee to simply accumulate 30 wellness points and take a Health Risk Assessment. In 2010, the program expanded to require each employee to accumulate 200 wellness points, take one Health Risk Assessment, and complete one biometric screening. The newly revised program rewards employees for accumulating aerobic miles, exercising, and eating healthy. In addition, a new program titled "Health Zone" grants employees points based on five metrics: body mass index, blood pressure, total cholesterol, high density lipo-protein, and low density lipo-protein. Employees can also earn additional points for improving their body mass index, blood pressure, and low density lipid proteins. Monroe Clinic offers 30 free circuit-training classes per month and onsite Zumba classes. The cafeteria's "Wellness Wednesdays" allow employees to receive wellness points for eating healthy meals.

## Program Success

With the understanding that implementing or changing a wellness program can cause some growing pains among employees, Monroe Clinic held Wellness Forums to review the facts and requirements of the new program. These resulted in better understanding and participation in the program. Employee/spouse/partner participation in the health screenings increased from 350 in 2009 to more than 1,000 in 2010.

In addition, the clinic distributed a health and wellness survey to receive employee input on wellness programming. Based on employee feedback, Monroe Clinic purchased treadmill workstations and increased healthy food options in the cafeteria.

Monroe Clinic expands its success into the community by helping to implement its wellness program at other companies in southern Wisconsin. Monroe Clinic wellness representatives will meet with outside managers to customize a wellness program that fits the needs of their employees.

## Overcoming Challenges

To lessen employee confusion or resistance over the changes in its wellness program, Monroe Clinic made a distinct effort to get the message in front of its employees that change was taking place and that there would be new requirements to meet in order to receive a health insurance discount. The Wellness Forums, held at all Monroe Clinic branches, provided an outlet for sharing this information.

*Monroe Clinic employee Brittney Hansen walks and works on one of two treadmill workstations.*

## Wellness Program Components

- Participating employees have the option to complete a Health Risk Assessment and biometric screening to receive a discount on their health insurance premium.
- Participating employees must also accumulate 200 wellness points to receive the discount.
- One-on-one coaching sessions are available to review results of HRA and biometric screening.
- Employees receive two wellness screenings per year to track baseline data and six-month progress.

**"At first, I [was] not happy about the change in the program. I've spent some time seriously thinking over the program as a whole and I feel I understand the reason the change has come about. It's obviously not to make things more difficult for us, but to help and encourage us to live a healthier more active lifestyle."**

*- Jan Ward, Monroe Clinic Employee*



# Fort HealthCare

**Corporate Office:** Fort Atkinson | **Employees:** 1,061  
**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 529  
**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

## Program Highlights

Review of employee HRA results offered the organization an opportunity to expand and adjust programming efforts to enhance the wellness initiative. Most recently, the HRA data indicated that the program should focus on weight management, physical activity, and diabetes. Fort HealthCare recently recreated their entire cafeteria menu, getting rid of the deep fryer and bringing in fresh fruits, vegetables, and meals made from scratch. The kitchen staff was also restructured on proper portion sizes when serving food. The cafeteria menu board now makes healthy food choices easy by placing an apple next to items that are part of the “Healthy Choice Incentive” (Fort HealthCare’s version of the “sweet tax”). Employees are encouraged to participate in quarterly wellness challenges, such as the recent team step challenge, to engage employees and encourage them to increase physical activity while at work. In addition, employees with a Body Mass Index greater than or equal to 30 were sent postcards with information on the weight loss management class Get L.I.T.E. that was offered at the hospital. Employees can participate in these classes at a discount.

## Program Success

Recently, a representative from Simply Well, Fort HealthCare’s online provider for wellness, presented Fort HealthCare’s current organizational health report. Over the past two years, participation in the program has increased by 25 percent. The results show that employees are enthusiastic about the Live Well Program. Biometric data results show that the program has been successfully addressing issues of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, nutrition, exercise, and cancer prevention.

## Overcoming Challenges

Despite the overall success of the Live Well program, an increasing number of participants continue to show signs of pre-diabetes and increased Body Mass Index. The organization has used this information to help create a stronger focus on wellness and programming that combats the greatest health risks. Adding “Walk and Talk Wednesdays,” employee mapped-out walking routes for indoor and outdoor use and intranet presentations on wellness, has helped educate employees and move them toward wellness.

## Wellness Program Components

- The “Live Well” wellness program is voluntary and allows employees to earn points in six dimensions of wellness.
- Employees are offered an annual health risk questionnaire and assessment, along with biometrics and several telephone feedback sessions based upon risk category.
- Participating employees earn rewards quarterly through events and a points system, which can be reimbursed for cash.
- Wellness ambassadors help to carry out employee wellness efforts at all offsite locations.

**“The Live Well program is a wonderful way to keep wellness top-of-mind on a daily basis, and keep our organization’s health insurance costs down. I encourage everyone to join the program and start benefiting from all the motivation, helpful tools and information the program provides.”**

*– Sharon Rateike, Fort HealthCare Employee and Corporate Wellness Program Coordinator*



# Dean Clinic

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 4,200  
**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 3,214  
**Success Story:** HRA Program and Health and Wellness Web Portal

## Wellness Program Components

- Wellness program receives executive level support, cited as a company goal for 2010 and 2011.
- A 15-person wellness team supports and provides wellness programs.
- Employees complete Health Risk Assessments, biometric screenings, and personal wellness profile questionnaire.
- A Health and Wellness Web Portal achieved a company-wide launch in February 2011.

## HRA Program Highlights

Over the course of 45 days, Dean Clinic administered Health Risk Assessments to 3,214 employees. With 70 percent participation, Dean Clinic obtained an excellent foundation to build a successful, employee-driven health and wellness program. Biometric screenings, made available to employees at the majority of the Dean Clinic locations across Southwest Wisconsin, included a fasting blood draw for total cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, weight, height, and waist circumference. Employees were also given an online personal wellness profile questionnaire consisting of 40 questions that assisted in identifying personal health risks. Upon completion of the questionnaire, a personal health risk profile was provided to each participating employee.

## Program Success

Dean Clinic cites both accessibility and incentives as major contributors to the success of its biometric screenings administration. In an effort to make the screenings available to all employees, Dean Clinic administered them at 44 of 56 locations, often on multiple days and before clinic-patient hours began. Employees also had the opportunity to participate without attending an actual biometric screening if they were able to provide the necessary values from their doctor. A personal reminder email was sent to all employees 24 hours prior to the following day's screenings. Each participating employee was then eligible to save \$20 on monthly health insurance premiums for completing the screening and online questionnaire. A drawing for 25, \$100 gift cards added extra incentive.

## Overcoming Challenges

Because Dean Clinic had never administered HRAs before, it had to educate staff about the process and benefits. To accomplish this, information was included in employee emails, newsletters, and in a letter from the CEO sent to each employee's home.

## Health and Wellness Web Portal Program Highlights

In February 2011, Dean Clinic successfully launched its Health and Wellness Web Portal. The web portal allows Dean Clinic to communicate with all 60+ locations simultaneously, giving each employee the same opportunity to make better lifestyle choices, whether it is through challenges, finding health and wellness information, or just interacting with fellow co-workers. Dean Clinic collaborated with LiveHealthier, a company that provides comprehensive employee wellness solutions to corporations, on the development of the web portal.

## Program Success

The joint effort between LiveHealthier and Dean Clinic made the web launch a success, with careful attention given to customizing the portal to look and feel like a Dean product. Including pertinent content made the site attractive and usable to employees, and more than 1,200 employees accessed the portal within the first three days of launch.

## Overcoming Challenges

A "soft launch" to 120 employees allowed for internal testing and feedback prior to the official launch in February.

**Dean Clinic's goal is to create a long-term culture change and to provide opportunities for employees to make healthier choices at work, enabling them to live and maintain a healthy lifestyle.**

# Stoughton Hospital

**Corporate Office:** Stoughton | **Employees:** 330

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 162

**Success Story:** The Wellness Train

## Program Highlights

Stoughton Hospital's wellness program offers a variety of options for employees. Monthly themes and quarterly challenges focus on a wellness topic and may include team or individual participation. Educational topics are offered to employees and the community as part of monthly Wellness Wednesdays.

Other program highlights include employee access to on-site exercise equipment, walking routes both on and off campus, and onsite Weight Watchers, zumba and yoga classes. Employees are also offered one-on-one exercise and nutrition consultations, as well as reduced-fee membership to local fitness clubs. Stoughton Hospital is a tobacco-free campus. The organization participates in the Community Wellness Coalition.

## Program Success

To promote employee participation and convenience, Stoughton Hospital took its annual wellness fair to various departments within the hospital, and referred to this as the Wellness Train. The Wellness Train was conducted in the fall so flu vaccination could be incorporated at the same time. The various compartments of the Wellness Train included: health risk appraisals, blood pressure screening, BMI/weight, flu vaccine, cholesterol screening, glucose testing, and educational materials. The Wellness Train was promoted through employee Town Hall meetings, on bulletin boards, and via employee email. The Wellness Train was offered at various times of day to capture the around-the-clock work schedules of employees. The Wellness Train was well received by employees and resulted in increased employee participation.

The success of the Stoughton Hospital Wellness Train has traveled to other companies within the community. With predicted changes in the workforce, promoting wellness within the workplace is viewed as a priority to the future success of many organizations.

## Overcoming Challenges

The most challenging component of employee wellness has been increasing employee participation and keeping individuals motivated to sustain ongoing lifestyle changes.

## Wellness Program Components

- The program integrates health promotion into five pillars of health and wellness: fitness, nutrition, mind/body, education, and community involvement.
- Employees receive points based on multiple dimensions of wellness including safety, flu vaccine, dental health, physical assessment, nutrition, fitness, education, tobacco/alcohol use, and mind/body/soul goals.
- A diverse wellness team coordinates the program with employee participation and input.
- The program receives support from leadership and is part of the hospital strategic plan.

**“To me, wellness is all about choices. You have to make the proper choices in regards to nutrition, exercise, and other lifestyle behaviors. In a fast-paced society, wellness takes energy and ongoing commitment by the individual in order to be successful.”**

*- Teresa Feidt, Director of Ambulatory Services*



# HospiceCare, Inc.

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 556

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** Open to all, participation varies

**Success Story:** Overall Wellness Program

## Program Highlights

Recognition of the risks associated with doing nothing and the rewards that come from making healthy lifestyle changes are at the core of HospiceCare's wellness program. The model for benefits and wellness at HospiceCare offers a team approach to setting realistic health goals where each member plays a key role. The team consists of the: 1) *employee*, responsible for health risk assessment and goal setting; 2) *employee's medical provider*, responsible for setting health standards and assisting employees with goal setting; 3) *HospiceCare*, responsible for developing wellness programming that motivates and encourages behavior change and; 4) *health insurance provider*, responsible for creating incentives and offering disease management to reduce health risks. Creative and fun wellness programming offers employees the opportunity to work toward achieving their health goals in a supportive, encouraging environment.

## Program Success

At the heart of HospiceCare's wellness program is its hard-working, innovative kitchen staff, who have transformed HospiceCare's Doc Rock Café menu through a focus on using healthy local foods and offering a weekly "wellness meal." Each wellness meal meets a specific calorie and fat goal and is crafted using fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains for a cost of only \$3.95. The rest of the value is offset by HospiceCare. "It's all about introducing people to good food that's not been highly processed," said HospiceCare Food Services Director Anne Swanson. "This has been a real commitment from HospiceCare."

According to Swanson, the healthier menu offerings have become increasingly popular with staff over the years. "Before the wellness meal was introduced in 2007, about 80 percent of our menu sales were items like burgers, fries, and grilled cheese sandwiches while vegetables made up less than 10 percent of sales. Today we're down to 22 percent of sales from those higher-fat foods while vegetables now equal 55-60 percent of all sales," she said.

In season, wellness meals include herbs and ingredients fresh from the HospiceCare garden, which was started in 2002. The kitchen also supports the local community by purchasing as much as possible from locally raised farmers and purveyors.

In 2010, HospiceCare staff, visitors, and patients consumed more than 3,600 wellness meals from the café. Staff members who are in the field visiting patients in their homes also take advantage of HospiceCare's wholesome offerings, often stopping by the café for the convenient "to go" boxed lunches that offer a healthy alternative to fast food drive thru meals

## Overcoming Challenges

Multiple worksite locations, a 24/7 operation, and limited "in-house" office hours are several of the challenges HospiceCare must overcome to ensure its wellness programs are available to all employees. The wellness committee is committed to creatively identifying alternate solutions to on-site activities to increase participation. Through employee surveys and evaluations, the committee was able to target programming to meet the wide variety of schedules and needs resulting in record participation in 2010.



*An employee tends the HospiceCare garden.*

## Wellness Program Components

- In 2011, HospiceCare will offer a comprehensive weight management/exercise program, a step program, lunch and learn topics, run/walk events, and company-sponsored social events.
- HospiceCare is a smoke-free environment at all times during the work day.
- Employees and spouses complete an online health risk assessment and biometric screening and receive an annual preventive exam.
- Employees on HospiceCare's health insurance plan will receive a preferred benefit rating for 2012 for completing their assessment, screening, and exam which will result in lower out-of-pocket costs to the participant.
- Employees who do not elect HospiceCare's health insurance will receive a cash reward for completing the assessment, screening, and exam.

**"Your individual excellence and dedication to your job is the reason for HospiceCare's success in caring for patients and families. To do your job, it takes energy, enthusiasm, motivation and resilience. It also takes renewal, attention to your health and a good work-life balance. Discover the ways in which you can 'Grow Your Potential' by participating in activities that will help you develop lifelong healthy habits."**

*- Susan Phillips, CEO, in an excerpt from the 2010 Employee Wellness Program: "Grow Your Potential" message to staff*





# 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*



# UW Health

**Corporate Office:** Madison | **Employees:** 14,656 across 3 organizations - UW Hospital and Clinics, UW Medical Foundation, UW School of Medicine and Public Health

**Employees Participating in Wellness Program:** 1,163

**Success Story:** Spring Training

## Program Highlights

Participants chose a personal challenge goal—either accumulate 10,000 steps a minimum of five days per week, or perform aerobic exercise for 30, 45, 60 or 90 minutes a minimum of five days per week. Incentives, prizes, and tips for success were offered throughout the program by the organization's exercise specialists and registered dietitian. In an effort to enhance the competition, three additional challenges were offered. During weeks two, four, and six participants were awarded an additional point for organizing a team exercise session, contributing to a community fruit bowl, or eating three or more servings of vegetables each day.

## Program Success

In 2010, 1,163 UW Health employees formed 125 teams by recruiting colleagues, family, and friends for a six-week activity challenge. Ninety-eight percent of the employees completed the challenge by exercising five days per week and meeting their personal goal.

## Overcoming Challenges

UW Health faces the ongoing challenge of engaging nearly 15,000 employees across numerous locations in their wellness programs. Employees from Eau Claire to Appleton to Freeport, Illinois, have access to programming, resources, and education. By offering a team challenge, UW Health aims to bring employees together and work towards a common goal of taking ownership of their health and wellness.

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## Wellness Program Components

- Spring Training is an annual team activity challenge encouraging employees to create camaraderie and exercise companions for a six-week program.
  - Spring Training motivates participants to start an exercise program or increase their level of daily physical activity.
  - The program encourages participants to explore the fun and experience the benefits of physical activity.
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**“I enjoyed connecting with co-workers on my team through the team challenges and finding different ways to have aerobic activity so I wasn’t always walking or jogging. I was able to get to know a newer co-worker through lunchtime walks. We all enjoyed rediscovering the value of a ‘change in scenery’ during the workday. It invigorated my afternoons.”**

*– Tami Langmeier, UWHC Clinical Nutrition*

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# Wellness Advice for Employers in the Region

Wellness leaders from the region offer the following suggestions to companies that are considering starting or improving upon their worksite wellness programs.

Doing something is better than doing nothing. Start small, find your internal champions, and continue to promote the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle.

- *Physicians Plus*

Leadership support is the key to success. Creative and “cutting edge” ideas do not have substance if they are not supported by administration in both theory and funding.

- *Divine Savior Healthcare*

Plan! Focus on building a strong foundation for your program. You don't necessarily need a lot of resources, but you do need to plan well, so that you are sure to use your resources in the best way possible.

- *Dean Health Plan*

Review the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Worksite Wellness Resource Kit and conduct a worksite wellness program analysis. Survey your employees to discover their interests and motivation, and ensure support from leadership and management.

- *Black River Memorial Hospital*

We recommend forming an Employee Wellness Team that represents various employee positions and a range of perspectives. This grassroots involvement will engage and energize your workforce while forming a blueprint that will meet the health and wellness needs of your workforce.

- *St. Mary's Hospital*

Use the Wellness Council of Wisconsin resources and the Wisconsin Worksite Wellness Resource Kit as your guides.

- *Group Health Cooperative of South Central Wisconsin*

Take the time to educate your employees well in advance and lean on your health plan for all the suggestions, assistance, and help that they may provide.

- *Dean Clinic*

Have a well structured plan for the year, but be willing to be flexible.

- *Edgerton Hospital and Health Services*

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## Madison Region Workforce Wellness Week May 15–21, 2011

Workforce Wellness Week is an opportunity for employers from every sector to encourage healthier living among employees. By highlighting wellness throughout the region, Workforce Wellness Week provides employees the chance to learn about wellness programs, enabling them to jumpstart or improve upon a wellness program in their own organization.

Learn more at  
[www.thrivehere.org/wellness](http://www.thrivehere.org/wellness)

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