

The *good* life



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A W A R D S

With nutritious potlucks
and group exercise classes,
these firms are building healthy teams.

Employees keep healthy habits alive at work

Exercise and weight-loss competitions, stress-management workshops and nutritious vending machine options are some of the ways local organizations are helping employees do good things for their health.

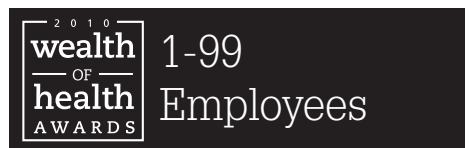
Twelve employers will be recognized this month for promoting wellness and encouraging physical activity in the workplace. They will receive the Wealth of Health Award, presented by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield, Rochester Region, and the Rochester Business Journal.

Many local companies and non-profit organizations have programs to foster healthy habits among their employees. They are finding that the push improves morale, increases productivity and reduces insurance costs.

Wealth of Health Award nominees were judged on employee involvement in health initiatives, the creativity of these activities to reach specific goals, ongoing promotion of healthy lifestyles and measurable results. The honorees were grouped by size, determined by the number of full-time and part-time employees.

The awards luncheon will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. June 10 at the Hyatt Regency Rochester.

Following is a closer look at each honoree's commitment to healthy living.



BlueTie Inc.

BlueTie Inc. attributes a decrease in sick days, weight and smoking among employees to a new culture of wellness in the firm.

"We have seen an improvement in employee morale and in the time it takes to roll out new products and features," says Ann Maynard, vice president of human resources. The Rochester-based company has 75 staffers and offers software collaboration services for businesses worldwide.

Sick time fell 50 percent from 2008 to 2009. The company credits wellness programs for the turnaround. Last year, 72 percent of the staff participated in new walking competitions held throughout the year.

"(In the first competition) we walked over 11 million steps and lost on average 1.72 pounds per week over the six-week competition. Employees were awarded with cash and gift cards," Maynard says. "A day doesn't go by when I don't see employees outside walking along our walking paths and in all sorts of weather."

Walking also increases motivation, creates strong team relationships and gives employees a break from work in the fresh air, she adds.

Smoking among BlueTie workers continues to decrease. Five quit in 2009, six in 2008.

"Our goal is to be smoke-free by 2011," Maynard says. An employee who was an avid smoker failed to quit several times until she got help with a BlueTie smoking cessation initiative.

"Each day that she had gone without a cigarette she would stop by and tell me. We would cheer her on and tell her just one more day and you can make it," Maynard says.

Her major withdrawals behind her, the employee started gaining weight. She turned to Zumba, an exercise program with dance moves. Now she is a certified instructor and will be teaching Zumba classes at BlueTie.

The company also introduced the Choose



BlueTie Inc. employees seek active pastimes during breaks, thanks to a new culture of wellness in the firm.

Sensibly program in its vending machines. Employees now have a choice between traditional junk food and healthier options that are lower in fat, sodium and sugar.

"Zappia Vending has reported that our healthy choices are outselling the junk food by two to one," Maynard says.

Along with its medical insurer, BlueTie rolled out its Healthy Rewards program last year. The program includes resources and rewards for employees who take steps to live and work in a healthier way.

Out of 52 employees enrolled in the medical plan, 70 percent took health risk assessments, which are part of the program.

The company also launched an employee assistance program to help staffers manage stress levels. The Work-Life Balance EAP provides unlimited telephone consultations with counselors for employees and their families. The benefit was added without any additional cost to BlueTie or its employees.

"To date, 16 employees or their family members have used EAP voluntarily," Maynard says.

The company also rolled out monthly lunch-and-learn sessions in which speakers addressed financial, physical and mental wellness.

It added equipment to its on-site fitness room and showers to its bathrooms as well.

"We survey our staff biannually to get feedback on their concerns about health and wellness and tailor the programs accordingly," Maynard says.

—Lynette Haaland

LunchByte Systems Inc.

Even on days when she can see her breath, Michele Resavage bundles up for a 40-minute walk with co-workers at LunchByte Systems Inc. in Rochester. The ritual has helped the customer support representative and national trainer establish an exercise routine.

"If you didn't have the other people participating, it would be very difficult some days to really want to step foot outside," Resavage says.

As a firm that specializes in school food-service management products and services, LunchByte Systems supports customers' wellness efforts. It started practicing what it preaches last year when it signed a contract with a company that offers online

and over-the-phone wellness services to employees.

Employees now get wellness coaching from registered nurses, online health lessons, health-risk assessments and goal-setting support. So that staffers are not derailed by stress or hard-to-kick habits at home, their families also have access to the services.

Group activities have proved essential for keeping motivation high. Last year, the firm entered three teams in the JP-Morgan Chase Corporate Challenge race and held two rounds of the Eat Well Live Well Challenge. Staffers also participated in walks and cycling races for various charities.

The company offers incentives to participate. Some 45 percent of employees earned wellness rewards in 2009, ranging from gift cards to paid time off. Overall, 61 percent participated in two or more wellness events.

To encourage staffers to give up tobacco, LunchByte offers up to \$100 every

six months for smoking cessation support, such as nicotine replacement therapy or counseling. In the March 2010 health-risk assessments, 83 percent of responding employees identified themselves as nonsmokers, a 2 percent gain over the prior year.

During the same period, 50 percent of respondents said they exercise four to seven days a week, 8 percent more than the prior year. Seventy-eight percent expressed a desire to improve their fitness regimens this year, and 83 percent reported maintaining healthy diets.

LunchByte Systems president Colin Sheridan and his wife are now tackling the Eat Well Live Well Challenge. The couple, who have three young children, also walk nightly after work.

Having a passionate registered dietitian on staff helped get staffers more invested in their health, he says. Besides reviewing participation levels quarterly and health outcomes annually, the dietitian leads lunch-and-learn sessions on nutrition and goal setting.

The wellness program represents more than participation and outcomes, Sheridan says.

"It's really important that we show our employees that they mean something to us, not just as employees, but as people," he says.

From his office, Sheridan notices waves of staffers leaving for a walk nearly every day. The camaraderie pleases him.

—Sheila Livadas

Relp Benefit Advisors

As an employee benefits consulting firm, Relp Benefit Advisors may be more adept than most firms at promoting health and wellness among its own employees.

The company uses the online Mayo Clinic Health Assessment to pinpoint employee health risks. The program tracks a number of categories, including perceptions of health, medical conditions, medications, medical and lifestyle risk factors, openness to change, and self-efficacy and importance.

All staffers receive a \$200 deduction in health-care insurance premiums for participating in the Mayo program. Not surprisingly, nearly all Relp staff members are signed on.

"The program is designed to help move employees' health behaviors in a positive way," says Tesia Woodworth, director of employee health and productivity for Relp.

Faced with the results, employees "receive immediate counseling to educate them on both their medical and lifestyle risk factors," she says.

Thanks to a wellness task force comprising a cross-section of employees, workers have access to healthy pursuits too. A four-week walking campaign gives staffers free pedometers and the opportunity to set daily and weekly distance goals. Everyone who completes the program receives an additional \$100 savings on health-care insurance premiums.

Last August, the company became a tobacco-free workplace and offered smoking cessation programs to help employees quit. Two months later, a third of staff members who had used tobacco products had quit successfully, while an additional 25 percent had significantly reduced daily cigarette use.

Relp has tracked other outcomes as well. Since it implemented the Mayo Clinic online assessment four years ago, participation levels have increased from 80 percent to 97 percent of the total employee

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Walking shoes are never far from Terri Sharpe, who walks and talks with co-workers on her lunch break five days a week.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

A growing percentage of staff members at Relph Benefit Advisors say their health is good, very good or excellent.

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population. And the percentage of employees who indicated their health status is good, very good or excellent reached 93.7 percent this year, up from 90 percent in 2009.

Another finding: The share of people with elevated blood sugar levels has dropped below 11 percent, and the number of tobacco users has decreased by 3 percent since last August.

Administrators also are encouraged by a growing willingness among staff members to make lifestyle changes to improve their health. Sixty percent of employees with risk factors related to lack of exercise, poor nutrition and deficiencies in emotional health now indicate that they are preparing to make specific behavioral changes to decrease this risk.

“Our employees are part of an environment where health and wellness permeate our corporate culture,” Woodworth says. Indeed, the effort was spearheaded four years ago by CEO Robert Relph after he learned of his own high cholesterol level. Relph determined to improve his own health as well the collective health of his employees.

—Debbie Waltzer

2010 **wealth OF health AWARDS** 100-499 Employees

Maplewood Nursing & Rehabilitation

Cheese-free vegetarian pizza has lightened up employee lunches at Maplewood Nursing & Rehabilitation in Webster. Staffers’ snacking has changed, too, ever since the facility’s vending machines shed their stock of junk food for one-cup packages of fruits and vegetables.

Besides reining in fat and calories, Maplewood employees have been paying more attention to their activity levels. Last year’s eight-week Maplewood Challenge, when 90 pedometer-wearing staffers walked 24,714 miles, helped get their bodies moving.

Persuading medical professionals to focus on their own wellness is not always simple, says Deborah Gates, human resources director for Maplewood. Many would rather pour their energy into caregiving.

Yet the Maplewood Challenge, an annual effort similar to the Eat Well Live Well Challenge, reminds staffers that their own health affects their productivity, Gates says. She designed the program with a variety of goals in mind, from fitness and injury prevention to nutrition and smoking cessation.

Maplewood debuted the challenge last April, just as the recession tightened its grip and the winter blahs had not yet cleared. Intentionally cryptic “tickler” posters about the program caught staffers’ attention, and “people were pretty intrigued about what the whole thing was” by the time it began, Gates says.

Besides aiming to improve employees’ physical health, the challenge addressed how to deal with stress, a chronic problem in health care, she says.

Seven employee teams helped run the challenge and stoke friendly interoffice competition. To make the program easier to follow away from work, staffers’ relatives and friends made up the eighth team.

Employees used various tools to track their personal goals and milestones, including scales and blood pressure monitors in the facility’s restrooms. A map of the United States, decorated with strings stretching from Rochester to other cities, helped teams visualize their walking totals.

As a result of participating in the challenge, some staffers quit smoking. Others lost as much as 15 pounds each.

Participants scarfed down 20,461 cups of fruits and vegetables, and Maplewood’s kitchen staff fielded more requests for healthy meals during the challenge.

Small gestures of variety help to get staffers excited about a wellness program, Gates says. Like last year’s, this year’s challenge includes make-your-own-salad days, complete with a rainbow of vitamin-rich fixings.

Employees were absent less frequently during the eight-week period, which shows how a well-planned wellness program affects an organization’s bottom line, says Greg Chambery, Maplewood’s administrator. A sense of teamwork also bubbled beneath the surface, he adds.

Gates agrees. During this year’s challenge, now under way, she has noticed employees stopping each other in the halls to ask how many miles they have walked in a given day.

Chambery notes that even Maplewood’s residents show interest in how staffers are doing with their exercise and nutri-



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

More than 50 people who work at Rotork Controls Inc. improved their blood pressure last year. The company has an on-site wellness coach.

tion goals.

“We’re usually the ones cheering them on,” he says.

—Sheila Livadas

Rotork Controls Inc.

Nearly all of Rotork Controls Inc.’s employees have been coached to achieve healthier lives.

Some 98 percent of 300 employees, including 135 local staffers, have sat down for one-on-one coaching.

“The presence of the on-site wellness coach has had a positive impact on the health and quality of lives of Rotork employees and their families,” says Helen Ehle, human resources manager.

Rotork is a worldwide manufacturer of electric, pneumatic and hydraulic valve actuators and associated control systems, valve gearboxes and valve accessories.

“We had a gentleman who has suffered with migraines for 15 years and, with the help of the wellness coach, came up with some solutions that have eliminated them altogether,” Ehle says.

The wellness coach advises staffers on injury prevention and recovery and en-

courages them to go to doctors when they should, Ehle says.

As a result, employees are visiting their physicians for more preventive care. Such measures keep chronic illness in check and reduce visits to the emergency room, she adds. And they help to restrain rising health insurance rates. Employees have used insurance mainly for routine check-ups and monitoring of health concerns in the last two years, which has helped keep insurance rates down, Ehle says.

Annual health risk assessments help staffers monitor progress. The results of Rotork’s health focus are found in the numbers:

In Rochester, 30 employees lost more than 240 pounds last year; one woman lost more than 30 pounds and has kept it off, Ehle says.

Twenty-one local staff members increased their weekly exercise and 23 reduced their body mass index in 2009. More than 50 Rochester employees improved their blood pressure, and four quit smoking last year. And four workers are no longer at high risk for stress-related illness because of Rotork’s wellness measures.

While improving health is a serious matter, Rotork administrators try to make it fun. The company holds an annual health fair with raffle prizes and vendors who discuss healthy living, pain management and exercise. Through the years the fair has featured an acupuncturist, a massage therapist, a foot doctor and holistic health practitioners.

A recent healthy recipe contest drew samples of approximately 20 recipes for everyone to taste. Recipes were printed and shared. Two winners—one for best-tasting and one for healthiest—took home \$50 gift certificates to restaurants of their choice.

Other initiatives include training for the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge race, a Maintain Don’t Gain competition, a Biggest Loser contest and the Eat Well Live Well Challenge.

All the activities aim to help employees stay motivated and increase the awareness of their health choices, Ehle says.

—Lynette Haaland



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Maplewood Nursing & Rehabilitation debuted the Maplewood Challenge last year. Employees were absent less frequently, ate 20,461 cups of fruits and vegetables and walked 24,714 miles.

Sentry Group

Founded in 1930, Sentry Group has long been ahead of the curve in the area of employee wellness.

Fully 30 years ago, the manufacturer of safes and other security storage containers

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WEALTH OF HEALTH

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opened an on-site fitness facility, complete with swimming pool, weight room, racquetball courts, cardiovascular equipment, Jacuzzi, sauna and more. The facility is open for a variety of daytime, evening and weekend hours, making it accessible to workers on all three shifts. Even better, Sentry charges just \$1.50 per week for use of the facility.

That's just the start, reports Debbie Edwards, corporate wellness manager. Other programs include weight management activities; free health risk assessments that measure cholesterol, blood pressure and glucose levels as well as body mass index; and an extensive employee assistance program to help staffers deal with parent-child issues, financial concerns and other sources of stress.

In addition, Sentry offers walking competitions to encourage staff members to log 10,000 steps each day. The company hands out free pedometers and encourages participants to log their progress in journals.

With the goal of eradicating smoking among its employees, Sentry offers free prescriptions for smoking cessation products. Referrals also are made to local support groups and other resources that can help employees kick the habit for good.

As a way of controlling rising costs of prescription drugs while promoting healthy behaviors, Sentry compiled a list of the top five health conditions or diseases prevalent among its employees. In descending order, they are anxiety and depression, asthma and allergies, ulcer disease, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Armed with this information, Sentry's wellness program offers tips and strategies for managing these conditions.

Other company wellness offerings include a car-seat program for expectant parents; a part-time on-site physician who provides free medical consultations as well as annual flu and H1N1 vaccinations; healthy and innovative offerings in the company's cafeteria and vending machines; and participation in team-based events, such as the JPMorgan Chase Corporate Challenge, a kickball league and a rowing competition.

Since the company's Wellness Healthy Combinations Program began in 2006, employee participation has increased by 20 percent, Edwards notes. Nearly half of the

firm's 450 workers take part in at least one aspect of Sentry's on-site wellness programs, and a recent survey showed a 95 percent approval rating for the programs.

"Workplace wellness programs are essential because healthy employees are happier and more productive employees," says Edwards, a 10-year Sentry veteran.

"In addition, if we can prevent illnesses, then we can lower health care costs. For example, if we can catch an employee in a prediabetes state—rather than wait until the individual has full-blown diabetes—then we can help them get better while controlling our health care costs.

—Debbie Waltzer



Nicholas H. Noyes Memorial Hospital

Nurses are by nature caring and compassionate people—always putting their patients' needs first. The only downside is that sometimes they ignore their own emotional and physical health and well-being.

As a result, members of the employee wellness program team at Nicholas H. Noyes Memorial Hospital in Dansville are always on the lookout for quick and easy ways to help nurses and other hospital staffers take better care of themselves and their families.

Noyes employs 540 full- and part-time workers. The eight-member wellness team has come up with dozens of strategies for encouraging healthy living—and employees are responding.

The hospital recently opened up its cardiac rehabilitation fitness room to employees and their loved ones when patients aren't using it, such as on weeknights and weekends. With a physician's approval, staffers can get a good workout by using the fitness room's numerous treadmills, stationary bikes and more.

Also, the hospital offers two competitions each year called Simply Fit. During the eight-week program, participants—340 of them this past fall—get points for demonstrating healthy behavior, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking water and exercising. The winner of the fall challenge walked away with a Wii game, thanks to a donation from a local vendor.

Employees and their families also can take advantage of the hospital's stress management courses offered at lunchtime, as well as yoga and stretching classes. Other folks meet regularly with the cafeteria's manager to brainstorm healthy food offerings that can be added to the menu, such as whole-wheat pasta and brown rice.

Moreover, the program team created Beat the Winter Blues Week in late February to help staffers and their families brainstorm stress-reducing and fun ways to pass the winter months. Activities included outdoor walks, a healthy snack smorgasbord, a hobby and crafts show and a family day of sledding, geocaching and scrapbooking.

It's all about fun and promoting wellness, says benefits administrator Gail Wing, who co-chairs the employee wellness program team with Pamela Maxson, community health educator.

"We're encouraging employees to stretch outside their comfort zone and make their personal wellness a priority," Wing says.

Staff members also participate in numerous community events that help others. Thirty-three employees last year participated in a fundraising walk for breast cancer awareness, which started at Frontier Field. One employee's husband runs a lim-



Photo by Jean Angillilli

Nicholas H. Noyes Memorial Hospital staffers take advantage of stress management courses, the cardiac rehab fitness room, group exercise classes and organized family activities.

ousine service, and he donated two stretch limos to drive the participants in style to and from the event. The fundraising team raised an impressive \$2,400 to help find a cure for breast cancer.

All activities aim to help hospital staff members improve their emotional and physical well-being, Wing notes.

—Debbie Waltzer

O'Connell Electric Co. Inc.

Years ago, staffers would reach for hunks of cake during employee birthday parties at O'Connell Electric Co. Inc. in Victor. Many now ask for slivers, says Susan Parkes McNally, executive vice president and treasurer for the firm.

McNally credits the change to O'Connell's wellness initiatives. Staffers are striving for balance without depriving themselves entirely, she says.

"I mean, it has made us a healthier place here, and people are thinking twice" about their habits, she says.

One wellness initiative last year that nudged staffers to whittle down their waistlines was the company's Biggest Loser contest. Starting with a weigh-in, 47 staffers competed for cash prizes based on the number of pounds or percentage of weight lost. In the end, participants shed a total of 294 pounds.

To keep the momentum going, the firm then launched a round of the Excellus Step Up competition. Nine teams counted their steps and the servings of fruits and vegetables they consumed for eight weeks.

Even the Step Up team at the bottom of the rankings during the contest received gift cards as motivation to keep going.

In mid-November, 45 staffers signed up for the Holiday Weight Management Challenge. Striving to keep their weight from rising more than two pounds over 10 weeks, employees had to invest in their own efforts by forking over \$5 to \$20.

"Plus, we as a company matched whatever they invested in themselves," McNally says.

Those who gained more than two pounds saw their money distributed to those who prevailed. In the end, 98 percent maintained or lost weight during the challenge.

Stress management lunch-and-learn sessions led by Excellus BlueCross BlueShield representatives also proved popular at the firm. Those who attended received healthy meals instead of typical meeting food, such as chicken wings and subs, McNally says.

Based on employee feedback, this year's lunch-and-learn sessions have focused on nutrition, healthy eating on the run, and food labels and grocery shopping, McNally says.

Other steps have helped wellness take root. The firm offers free flu shots to staffers and family members older than 18, as well as smoking cessation support and health-risk assessments and biometric screenings.

Beyond specific wellness challenges, certain habits have changed at the firm. Some staffers now bring healthier snacks to work, while others share low-fat recipes with co-workers.

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Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Sentry Group's fitness facility—complete with racquetball courts, pool, weight room and more—opened 30 years ago.



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

O'Connell Electric Co. Inc. tapped the Excellus Step Up program to help employees get moving. Nine teams competed, and everyone received gift cards to keep motivation high.

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McNally, who has participated in the Step Up competition and other initiatives, says employees have thanked company leaders for showing such an active interest in their health.

—Sheila Livadas

St. Ann's Community

A focus on wellness at St. Ann's Community is prodding the whole staff to make healthy lifestyle changes.

"By creating programs, implementing them and rooting for employees, it has spurred significant results," says Ed Neal, director of human resources at the senior care provider.

St. Ann's employs 1,109 people. Each one sees the employee health nurse once a year for a health history update. The nurse recommends lifestyle adjustments such as exercise, doctor visits and flu shots. A large number of employees take her advice: Roughly 700 of them received free, on-site flu shots this past season.

St. Ann's has a healthy program committee called Team Wellness. The group offers at least one nutrition or exercise program at all times. Last year about 200 employees participated in the team's nutrition and exercise programs.

"Team Wellness comes up with fresh, creative and fun programs to motivate employees to continually participate," Neal says. Victories are celebrated through certificates, prizes, awards and friendly pats on the back, he adds.

On-site programs include Zumba classes three times per week, stair climbing, Maintain-Don't Gain programs, smoking cessation classes—many people have quit, Neal says—and a workshop with Consumer Credit Counseling Services on under-



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Zumba classes are offered three times per week at St. Ann's Community. Other healthy activities include stair climbing, Weight Watchers and credit counseling.

standing credit reports and scores.

Approximately 40 people participated in on-site Weight Watchers programs; two have reached and are maintaining their lifetime weight goals, Neal says.

Off-site Team Wellness programs have included the American Heart Association Walk and a collaboration with the Downtown Fitness Club and its 2009 Boot Camp.

Since January 2009, St. Ann's has participated in Excellus BlueCross BlueShield's Healthy Rewards program. Employees have a financial incentive to sustain their efforts in exercise and smart eating. Last year, 614 people at St. Ann's enrolled in Healthy Rewards and accumulated \$37,285.

Mental, psychological and spiritual health are addressed as well. St. Ann's pro-

vides up to five free anonymous therapy sessions each year for all benefits-eligible employees. Some 100 staff members attended a free on-site seminar on managing stress. Employees can find solitude in St. Ann's chapel, and the pastoral care staff leads a monthly schedule of services.

Education is a big part of St. Ann's health focus. On a bulletin board by the cafeteria, the wellness team posts informative articles on topics that affect health, such as financial wellness, managing stress, cholesterol and blood glucose numbers, summer safety, the warning signs of abuse and healthy eating during the holidays. The clinical nutrition team shares diet and recipe tips at an information table once a year; employees stop by

with questions and have a chance to talk with a registered dietitian.

As for eating, the employee cafeteria has a daily salad bar, whole wheat bread and many fruits and vegetables. Its Strive for Five card gives customers a free serving of fruits or vegetables for every four purchased. Hundreds of the cards have been requested since the program's inception a year ago.

Overall outcomes, Neal says, are very good.

—Lynette Haaland



Paetec Holding Corp.

Paetec Holding Corp. has three quarters of its 3,800 employees striving for healthier lifestyles.

"At least 75 percent of the employees participated in one or more wellness programs throughout 2009," says Cheryl Koester, benefits specialist at Paetec.

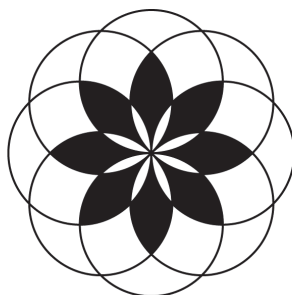
The Perinton-based telecommunications firm, with 900 Rochester staffers, launched the Pillars of Wellness program this year. It has four components: early intervention, quality of life, activity and knowledge.

Workers have an incentive to complete the program: \$10 per pay period—\$260 annually—and eligibility for a monthly drawing of \$500. All employees also have the opportunity to see flat or reduced out-of-pocket health care costs through participation.

"We currently have over 500 employees actively working towards completing the Pillars of Wellness program," Koester says.

Paetec's benefits budget increased only 2.9 percent from 2009 to 2010 with mini-

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Full of Life

St. Ann's Community is One of Rochester's Healthiest Places to Work!

As a Wealth of Health Award recipient for two consecutive years and one of Rochester's largest private employers, St. Ann's is committed to employee health and well being. With spiritual services, exercise programs, free flu shots and a whole lot more, we are honored to have been recognized.

Thank you to all St. Ann's employees whose commitment and total dedication to senior services make us proud every day!

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mal impact to premiums or cost overall. During the previous year, costs increased closer to the national average of roughly 10 percent, Koester says.

In addition, the company's disability claims fell 50 percent over a recent eight-month period as a result of continued outreach and program management.

Paetec offers many programs throughout the year. Most popular is the Eat Well Live Well Challenge in the spring; more than 600 staffers participated last year and received free pedometers and a chance to win prizes.

This January, Paetec launched a weight management program called Lose and Win. More than 400 workers in more than 50 office locations are participating in the eight-week challenge. It offers fundamentals of weight loss and practical, everyday tips on how to lose pounds or maintain a healthy weight. Support is one of the key components of the challenge, Koester says.

Last year, 1,390 employees completed a health risk assessment, an increase of 350 from 2008. The assessments give employees personalized reports outlining their current health habits and ways to improve, she says.

Also in 2009, more than 300 employees received coaching outreach calls and 155 employees participated in and completed one of the wellness coaching programs.

Forty-six Paetec employees participated in the tobacco cessation program in 2009, saving an estimated \$200,000 or more in future claims costs. One employee went through a coaching program and has been successfully smoke-free for nearly a year.

Musculoskeletal claims were one of Paetec's largest claims categories in 2009. Some 58 percent of wellness program participants were identified as high risks for musculoskeletal problems. The company launched the Healthy Back program in the third quarter of 2009, helping participants find the right provider, care, medications and lifestyle. The estimated saving was more than \$100,000 in future claims costs, Koester says.

Paetec focuses on specific health topics in a monthly e-mail newsletter and periodic lunch-and-learn sessions.

As a long-term commitment to wellness, the company covers all costs of preventive screenings or office visits with no co-payment. It also pays the full cost of flu shots for all members.

Paetec tweaks its offerings with the help of focus groups and employee wellness surveys.

—Lynette Haaland



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

The University of Rochester works to develop ideas to keep employee wellness initiatives fresh and exciting.

University of Rochester

Every Friday from June to October, a truck packed with locally grown produce, grass-fed meat and fresh bread pulls up to the Goler House at the University of Rochester. More than 100 staffers then arrive to carry away their share of the truck's contents, which they have purchased ahead of time through UR's Community Supported Agriculture project.

Now in full swing after a brief pilot project last year, the CSA program has been attractive for staffers because of its flexibility and convenience, says Shaquana Divers, senior health project coordinator for employee wellness at UR. Pre-ordering options allow participants to tweak their produce allotments and request, for instance, more cherries and fewer heads of lettuce. And though each weekly share feeds a family of four, several single staffers have paired up with co-workers to split the \$485 membership fee and the fruits and vegetables.

Besides providing employees with hassle-free access to homegrown food, UR recently debuted Your Health. Program components include online personal health assessments, wellness management tools and telephone coaching for issues related to nutrition, weight, stress and tobacco dependence.

To interest staffers in Your Health, UR offers \$100 for completing online personal health assessments. Employees who com-

plete disease management programs that address conditions such as asthma, diabetes, lower back pain and hypertension also receive \$100.

Staffers get prescription drug discounts for certain diagnoses or if they buy medications from UR's pharmacy. In addition, UR pays for nicotine replacement therapy prescriptions if staffers participate in a tobacco cessation program.

Face-to-face wellness coaching occurs at UR's recently opened Healthy Living Center, where staffers learn how to prevent or delay diabetes or control elevated cholesterol. Telephone outreach has helped spread the word about the center's services, Divers says.

One of the most popular programs at the Healthy Living Center focuses on managing stress through mindfulness. The eight-week program, led by a UR-employed psychiatrist, was full both times it was offered this year.

Statistics show that UR's wellness efforts are gaining momentum. This year, 4,200 employees or their spouses completed personal health assessments, and 1,000 employees or spouses had biometric screenings.

UR staffers are showing more interest in exercise too. The campus walking program has 1,525 members, and participation in the national Bike to Work Week program is strong.

To keep herself active, Divers often attends yoga classes held in UR's Interfaith Chapel. Attendance at the classes has risen 50 percent in the last two years.

Divers also gets a biometric screening annually to keep tabs on her own wellness goals.

"It's very important to me to live this lifestyle," she says.

—Sheila Livadas

Verizon Wireless

Employees at Verizon Wireless' regional headquarters on Calkins Road are serious about their physical fitness. Every weekday, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., the company's 2,500-square-foot fitness center is humming with activity, with staffers using cardio, circuit, free-weight and cycling equipment.

For just \$15 a month—collected painlessly via payroll deduction—Verizon's 1,300 local employees get access to two health and wellness coordinators who provide everything from blood pressure checks and body composition evaluations to personal training and group exercise classes, such as spinning, yoga and a killer 15-minute boot camp.

"Happier people are more productive people, and fitness is a great way to find happiness," says Sarah Morgan, health and wellness coordinator for the Rochester market. Nationwide, the 82,000-employee corporation offers 31 health and wellness centers, with plans to open new facilities in the near future.

In addition to the fully equipped fitness center, staffers also are treated to a host of wellness programs and services, such as Weight Watchers at Work, smoking ces-



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

Verizon Wireless employees take their fitness seriously—but manage to have fun in the process.

sation, chair massages, CPR/AED/first aid classes, flu shot clinics, health fairs, informational newsletters and more.

Each month, informational fliers are placed on employees' desks, providing tips on everything from proper stretching techniques to painless ways to cut 100 calories from one's daily intake.

The program is working, Morgan reports.

Since the fitness center opened its doors on Sept. 23, 2008, roughly 42 percent of local employees in Verizon's call center, retail operations and corporate office have used the facility. That adds up to 15,921 individual visits, including 1,213 folks who routinely participate in group exercise classes.

During a recent survey about their personal health and wellness progress, the pool of 166 respondents reported many positive changes. Among those, 69 percent say they now make healthier food choices, while 66 percent have increased their daily amount of physical activity. What's more, 10 percent have quit smoking and 25 percent report a decisive improvement in striking a healthy work-life balance.

Morgan cites the case of a human resources employee. Prior to the fitness center's opening, the 47-year-old had never stepped foot inside a gym. Now he's a daily visitor and has plans to become a fitness coach and personal trainer when he retires.

Indeed, the fitness center is geared toward every employee, whether a novice exerciser or a long-time athlete. "We want everyone to experience their best workout," she says. "If you've never stepped onto a treadmill before, that's OK. We'll guide you through the process and stay with you every step of the way."

—Debbie Waltzer



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

More than 600 employees of Paetec Holding Corp. participated in the Eat Well Live Well Challenge last year; they received free pedometers and a chance to win prizes.

Special Recognition—Ontario ARC

Though it has had a wellness committee since 2001 and contributes significantly to staff health care coverage, Ontario ARC in the last two years has increased efforts to boost employee wellness.

Among its initiatives: It added a page devoted to the subject on its website, published a cookbook by the agency's nutritionist and distributed it to staff members, coordinated an eight-week staff walking program and established a wellness kitchen and an exercise DVD lending library.

It also offered chair massages, stress management seminars, biometric screenings, back safety training, a nightly exercise group, daytime exercise classes and after-work recreation, such as golf, bowling and softball events.

Starting in April, the agency became tobacco-free; smoking cessation classes, products and groups are offered to staffers who want to quit.

—Sally Parker



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Cynthia Reddeck-LiDestri, MD, LiDestri Foods

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- Maplewood Nursing & Rehabilitation
- Rotork Controls Inc.
- Sentry Group

500-1,999 employees

- O'Connell Electric Company Inc.
- Noyes Memorial Hospital
- St. Ann's Community

2,000+ employees

- PAETEC Holding Corp.
- University of Rochester
- Verizon Wireless

Special Recognition to Ontario ARC

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