



## 2010 Corporate Eye on Wellness Award Recipient

*The Eye on Wellness awards recognize both an organization and an individual who've shown to be outstanding wellness advocates and excellent role models for others.*

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#### Congratulations to Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers...



**These Arizona-based healthcare organizations, members of Catholic Healthcare West, have put a focus on helping their employees enhance their personal and professional lives through a wide-ranging wellness program that gives the organization quantifiable insight into the impact and effectiveness of the initiative.**

As an organization focused on helping others, Arizona-based Chandler Regional and Mercy Gilbert Medical Centers (CHW-East Valley), members of the Catholic Healthcare West network, recognized in 2006 that a comprehensive, holistic wellness initiative was needed to enhance the health and productivity of its own 3,000 employees. The organization sought to provide employees with a wide-ranging program that would meet its wellness goals, as well as positively impact the utilization of its self-funded medical plan. The organization wanted to implement a program that would be fun and motivational to keep engagement rates high, yet goal-oriented to align with its philosophy that employees who are satisfied physically, spiritually, emotionally, and financially will live fuller, more purposeful lives.

In 2006, CHW-East Valley rolled out its prevention-focused wellness program. The organization anticipated it would not only benefit from a more healthy, productive and engaged workforce, but that its own healthcare costs could be better managed by preventing the onset of a variety of lifestyle-related health conditions like type 2 diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

“CHW-East Valley offers a variety of wellness programs including annual comprehensive wellness screenings, online health risk appraisals, weight loss, yoga and other conditioning programs, monthly chair massage, nutritional counseling, smoking cessation and the Virgin HealthMiles program that pays employees to get more active,” says Kristina Bignoli, employee wellness program coordinator for CHW-East Valley. “At any given time, 30 percent of eligible employees are engaged in the wellness initiative, well above the single-digit industry average participation rates of most wellness programs.”

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CHW-East Valley*





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CHW-East Valley supports its employees’ wellness improvement efforts in a number of ways designed to keep them motivated and involved. For instance, participants in the 10-week weight loss program are reimbursed half the cost of the program for attending at least eight meetings and losing at least 9 pounds. Participants in the Virgin HealthMiles program who earn a certain number of HealthMiles in that same 10-week timeframe are also reimbursed for the entire weight loss program fee. Half and full marathon trainees are reimbursed partial registration fees for the completion of a running or walking event. CHW-East Valley also has what it calls the “Pedometer Police,” who search out and reward employees wearing their Virgin HealthMiles GoZone pedometers at work. Twice yearly, the company’s Employee Wellness and Human Resource Department hosts a Health Wellness Fair where they invite local wellness practitioners to share their expertise. Employees enjoy healthy food and beverages, along with chair massage, back care strategies and mini wellness screenings.

CHW-East Valley also takes a highly creative approach to keeping employees engaged in its wellness initiative. Fun, ongoing challenges and games such as walking-based treasure hunts, interactive games of Clue brought to life with a focus on fitness, a 5K fun run and a three-month body fat composition loss contest called “Pass the Pig” where the team with the largest percentage lost not only enjoy bragging rights but possession of an “oinking” stuffed pig have helped the company maintain its impressive engagement levels.

While helping employees get healthier – and have fun in the process – is a main priority for CHW-East Valley’s wellness program, enabling the organization to better control its healthcare costs is equally as important. The organization leverages its online health risk assessment data and reporting from the Virgin HealthMiles program to quantify the effectiveness of its wellness programming in positively impacting healthy behaviors. “Employees report that their pedometers have helped them become accountable and take charge of their daily activity level,” said Bignoli. “People who never thought they could hike a mountain or walk a five kilometer race have come to us thanking our company for providing numerous opportunities to improve their health.” Through its weight loss program, facilitators report back to the company regarding pounds lost throughout the 10-week programs. Pounds lost are also reported during the company’s annual Holiday Weigh-Out. Lastly, the company solicits employee testimonials and has compiled a wealth of success stories covering all areas of its wellness program including fitness accomplishments, weight-loss, and cholesterol and glucose control. Last, the company is in the process of working with its health insurance provider to demonstrate a direct correlation between healthy behavior change and health care utilization. The organization is developing solid health care cost savings data and look forwards to positive quantifiable outcomes later in 2010.

“We are so fortunate to work for a company that encourages a healthy lifestyle and allows for creative and innovative methods to get our employees healthy and happy,” said Bignoli. “In the future, we are planning on further expanding our wellness offerings to include programs like family fitness, staircase piano programs, hypnosis, personal growth through motivational speaker lunch and learns, and many more holistic approaches to help our employees achieve all their goals in life.”