



2010 National Employee Wellness Month Employer Stories:



As Ochsner Health System, an academic, non-profit integrated healthcare system comprised of eight hospitals and 35 clinics located throughout Louisiana, continued to grow and expand, so did its healthcare costs. The company recognized that a more integrated and accessible employee health program was needed to replace its home-grown, manual-based wellness program. The company also sought to increase employee participation, which would further curb healthcare cost increases.

In December 2008, Ochsner engaged Virgin HealthMiles based on the strength of its activity tracking devices and online platform that provided our employees with an automated, accurate and verifiable way to capture their daily activity.

With the Virgin HealthMiles program, Ochsner employees could earn points for their physical activity and program participation, which enabled them to earn up to \$300 annually in cash rewards. To further spur participation, Ochsner offered employees the opportunity to earn up to a \$2,000 discount on health insurance premiums once they reached a certain level in the Virgin HealthMiles program.

Online Features Promote Participation, Streamline Processes

One of the greatest benefits Ochsner has realized with Virgin HealthMiles is the program's online delivery, which has enhanced company-wide engagement, a once difficult goal to achieve. The program enabled employees to capture their daily activity with activity tracking devices that provide validated data, as well as record important biometric information. Employees have access to their own online program portal where they view their progress, upload steps captured by their pedometers, and log any other activities they have participated in, such as an aerobics class or cycling to work from home.

Automated reporting tools provided Ochsner's wellness director with more control over managing and understanding the impact of the wellness program. The tools also enabled the organization to create department efficiencies by greatly reducing the number of staff needed to manage its overall wellness strategy.

Enjoying Quantifiable Cost Decreases

Thanks to clear opportunities to earn discounts on health insurance premiums as well as cash rewards, 81 percent of Ochsner's employees have enrolled in its Virgin HealthMiles employee health program. Moreover, more than 50 percent of enrolled employees qualified for premium discounts in 2010. From a wellness perspective, 89 percent of Ochsner's enrolled employees have improved or maintained their Body Mass Index numbers, and 82 percent have lowered or maintained their blood pressure.

The wellness program also played a role in helping the company curb its healthcare cost increases. While the national healthcare trend for 2009 healthcare cost increases was approximately 10%, Ochsner's plan trended only 3% while increasing new employee participation by 13%. Employee only medical claims were down over 2008, by \$3 million including the new employee participant growth in the plan. Over time, Ochsner expects to see even more reductions in healthcare costs, especially around pharmacy costs as employees

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"Our Virgin HealthMiles program is finally the system-wide wellness program we always wanted, and we are thrilled with the results. We have been able to help our employees stay healthy, while putting more money in their pockets and lowering overall healthcare costs."

*Dorothy Cain, R.N.
System Coordinator, Ochsner Wellness
Ochsner Health System*

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become healthier and can reduce their reliance on, or eliminate altogether, certain medications, with their doctor's approval.

For Ochsner, the Virgin HealthMiles employee health program is finally the system-wide wellness program it has always wanted. Ochsner has helped its employees stay healthy while putting more money in their pockets and lowering overall healthcare costs. Innovation is a key strategy at Ochsner and the Virgin HealthMiles product and the creative HR and wellness team are making a difference in the quality of life for its employees, which lead to better engagement, patient satisfaction and loyalty.