



EDITOR'S NOTE

MARISA PALMIERI EDITOR

Contact Marisa at 216/706-3764 or via email at mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net.

Reducing costs, improving lives

Research shows about 40 percent of all health care expenses in the U.S. stem from preventable chronic illnesses that are most often caused by three lifestyle choices: physical inactivity, poor diet and tobacco use, according to the Cleveland Clinic.

At the same time, the Affordable Care Act is forcing employers' hands to offer health care to all workers or pay a penalty, and with that pressure comes the heightened desire to control costs. What if there were a way to reduce costs while improving employees' productivity and overall well-being? That's where workplace wellness comes into play.

I hear about wellness all the time from my sister Gina. In addition to being one of my best friends, a half-marathon runner and a supermom to my 18-month-old nephew, Andy, she's a client wellness coordinator for Gallagher Benefits Services and a former wellness program manager for a major manufacturer. She knows a thing or two about getting employees healthy and the importance of doing so.

Consider that medical costs fall by about \$3.27 for every dollar spent on wellness programs and absenteeism costs fall by about \$2.73 for every dollar spent, according to a 2010 report published by the journal *Health Affairs*.

These ROI measures are reason enough take a look at wellness programming, but that doesn't mean implementing such efforts is easy, as my sister sees firsthand in her work.

That's why I turned to her for a few simple ideas any company can use.

Here are some of her thoughts.

Begin with free. Gina says most insurance carriers offer some wellness offerings, such as a tobacco quit line, discounts to weight-loss programs and the like, but many employees don't take advantage of them. Start by finding out what's available to your firm and promoting those internally. Don't forget about other potentially free resources from groups or associations you belong to. There also may be government funding available. For example, Ohio's Bureau of Workers' Compensation offers a wellness grant program.

Start a wellness committee. You may be thinking, "This is all great, but I still don't have time to coordinate it." Why not delegate some duties to an employee wellness committee? They can brainstorm ideas, create a newsletter or bulletin board and conduct a survey to see what offerings employees would take advantage of if they were available (such as healthy snacks, blood pressure screenings, smoking cessation classes, etc.). Also consider grouping wellness in with safety. Communicating wellness information during safety tailgate talks is a better venue than sharing it at a benefits enrollment meeting when everyone's just concerned with their rates.

Have a strategy. A "Biggest Loser" program may be fun and effective on a short-term basis, but is it sustainable and is it achieving long-term goals? Maybe not. Gina recommends a company wellness strategy focusing on the Big 4 areas of tobacco use, nutrition, exercise and stress management. Why? These are the areas linked to preventable chronic illnesses that cost us all so much.

Landscape Management

HEADQUARTERS

1360 EAST 9TH ST., SUITE 1070, CLEVELAND, OH 44114

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor Marisa Palmieri 216/706-3764 | mpalmieri@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Editor Beth Geraci 216/706-3756 | bgeraci@northcoastmedia.net

Contributing Editors Heather & Jamie Gooch 330/723-3539 | hgooch@northcoastmedia.net, jgooch@northcoastmedia.net

Art Director Tracie Martinez 216/363-7924 | tmartinez@northcoastmedia.net

ADVERTISING STAFF

Publisher Bill Roddy 216/706-3758
Fax: 216/706-3712 | broddy@northcoastmedia.net

North American Sales Manager Craig MacGregor 216/706-3787
Fax: 216/706-3712 | cmacgregor@northcoastmedia.net

National Account Manager Carla Kastanis 216/363-7923
Fax: 216/706-3712 | ckastanis@northcoastmedia.net

Account Executive Classifieds Kelli Velasquez 216/706-3767
Fax: 216/706-3712 | kvelasquez@northcoastmedia.net

BUSINESS STAFF

Vice President, Sales Patrick Roberts 216/706-3736
Fax: 216/706-3712 | proberts@northcoastmedia.net

Administrative Coordinator Petra Turko 216/706-3768 | pturko@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Manager Ryan Bockmuller 216/706-3772
Fax: 216/706-3712 | rbockmuller@northcoastmedia.net

Marketing Specialist Michelle Mitchell 216/706-7922
Fax: 216/706-3712 | mmitchell@northcoastmedia.net

Manager, Production Services Terri Johnstone 216/978-9622 | tjohnstone@northcoastmedia.net

Senior Audience Development Manager Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

MARKETING/MAGAZINE SERVICES

Reprints & Permissions Nick Iademarco 877/652-5295 | niademarco@wrightsmedia.com

Circulation List Rental Antoinette Sanchez-Perkins 216/706-3750 | asanchez-perkins@northcoastmedia.net

Subscriber, Customer Service 847/763-4942
For current single copy, back issues, or CD-ROM



CORPORATE OFFICERS

President & CEO Kevin Stoltman 216/706-3740 | kstoltman@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Finance & Operations Steve Galperin 216/706-3705 | sgalperin@northcoastmedia.net

VP of Graphic Design & Production Pete Seltzer 216/706-3737 | pseltzer@northcoastmedia.net

Editorial Director Marty Whitford 216/706-3766 | mwhitford@northcoastmedia.net