



Vern Little
Mayor

City of Lake Stevens, Washington Lake Stevens Employee Wellness Program

Company Overview

- Municipal government
- Lake Stevens, Washington
- 65 people

Program Components

- Annual HRA and biennial onsite biometric screenings.
- Health coaching, nurse advice line, EAP, tobacco cessation benefit coverage, self-care books.
- Personalized web portal that includes a health record, self-assessments, behavior change programs, videos, tracking tools.
- Themed campaigns that promote and support behavior change.
- Department lunchtime walking groups.
- Police department has a bicycling group.
- Annual traditions, such as disc golf, poker walk, turkey bowl, and department directors' cook-off, build camaraderie and contribute to a healthy workplace culture.
- \$100 annual incentive for engagement.
- Wellness store that offers merchandise for earned wellness points.

Program Success Story

- Success began with management support.
- City council passed a resolution supporting the wellness program.
- Department directors participate in all wellness events.
- Employee testimonial: "Both our Mayor and Chief of Police lost weight with significant diet and exercise changes. The results of their hard work inspired me, and others, to become healthier. In January, I signed up for a 'Learn to Run' class and met my goal of running a 5K race in March. Since then, I have run at least one race each month. I've lost weight, lowered my blood pressure and cholesterol to healthy levels, and I feel healthy." (Police Records Clerk)

Mayor's Statement

"The City of Lake Stevens cares about the well-being of employees and their families. Our wellness initiatives and a supportive work environment help control health costs, contribute to positive morale and high level performance, and ultimately help us better serve the City's citizens."

Understanding the Health Care Landscape

With the passage of the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* in March 2010, health care has become more accessible to Americans, especially adults working for small/medium-sized employers that, compared to large employers, typically have been limited in providing employee health insurance. Although the health care landscape is changing, its funding will continue to be a cost burden to employees and employers. Consider the following:

- Our nation's health spending is expected to increase at a faster rate than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) sometime before 2014. The percentage of GDP spent on health care is projected to be 18.7 in 2014, compared to 15.3 percent in 2005.¹ Businesses, regardless of size, view this trend as unsustainable.²
- Sixty-eight percent of companies with fewer than 200 employees offered health insurance to their workers in 2010.³
- Fifty-four percent of small companies (3–199 employees) reported the high cost of health insurance as the reason for not offering health benefits in 2010.⁴
- In 2010, employees in small companies (3–199 employees) contribute \$865 annually for single coverage, compared to \$917 contributed by employees in large companies (200 or more workers). In contrast, employees in small companies contribute significantly more annually for family coverage than those in large companies (\$4,665 compared to \$3,652).⁴

Although the new legislation expands access to *medical care* for working adults and their families, the fact remains that the primary drivers of runaway health care costs need to be addressed proactively through a greater investment in prevention, health risk reduction, and disease management.⁵ While individuals have the ultimate role in managing their "wellness," employers have a vested interest in supporting their employees (and their families) in taking charge of their health.

Health promotion—a good business decision

This *Leading by Example* report is designed to help the small/medium-sized employer leverage the power of employee health as a cost containment strategy and more importantly as a productivity strategy that helps support, protect, and enhance a company's number one asset: its employees.

