

Engaging Employees in Health and Wellness: the *Healthy Pfizer* Program

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Although Pfizer is in the healthcare industry, its corporate leadership struggles with the same challenges that face other large and small businesses in keeping employees and family members healthy and productive. While managing tremendous investments in health, Pfizer sought to inform, motivate, and empower its employees to take the steps toward health improvement, sickness prevention, and disease reduction that have been proven to positively affect the well-being of employees and their families.

By managing engagement and outcomes, *Healthy Pfizer* has succeeded in influencing employee understanding and action. In year 2 of this new employee-directed health management initiative that began in 2005, *Healthy Pfizer* has exceeded initial benchmarks for participation. Year 1 (June 2005 through June 2006) saw an 83% health questionnaire completion rate among colleagues, with 28% and 17% of those identified as being eligible for *Living Healthy* and *Care Counseling* programs, respectively, enrolling in these coaching programs. Measurable changes in employee health are evident, and indications point to improvements in healthcare utilization, claims, cost, productivity, absenteeism, and presenteeism (the degree to which individuals are fully present and functioning while they are at work).

Healthy Pfizer was launched with defined goals for the first 3 years. Year 1 included employee engagement through healthcare awareness and understanding. Year 2 comprised behavior change, including exercise frequency, smoking reduction, medication adherence, and preventive care. Year 3 involves utilization changes, such as patterns of hospital and emergency department use and physician visits.

employee demographics are 54.6% men and 45.6% women, with a mean age of 40 years and just over 9 years of Pfizer service. Factoring in dependents, the mean age of the covered lives is 28.6 years, and the mean family size is 2.56 members.

The *Healthy Pfizer* population includes employees working at all Pfizer sites, its sales force, as well as dependents. Major sites include the company's headquarters in New York City and Brooklyn, New York, as well as sites with more than 500 employees in Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, and California. When *Healthy Pfizer* was launched in June 2005, Pfizer offered 5 medical plan options, with most covered lives enrolling in self-insured plans.

The *Healthy Pfizer* program is multifaceted. Components include a health questionnaire, a Web portal with access to health information, health coaching, and assistance with disease management. The program also provides access to online health advisors, workplace-based services, and an electronic data warehouse to record and benchmark progress.

All US Pfizer employees are considered *Healthy Pfizer* participants. The level of involvement that an employee pursues is his or her choice. The first step is completing the 120-item health questionnaire—a risk assessment tool. The questions address family disease history, exercise frequency and fitness, results of recent disease screenings, habits related to eating and drinking, and biometric data, including body mass index, cholesterol and glucose levels, and questions that assess emotional health status.

The online questionnaire can be completed in less than 15 minutes by registering at a customized site powered by *Healthy Pfizer* partner WebMD.² The site offers a variety of resources on healthy lifestyles, behavior modification, disease management, stress reduction, child-rearing, and other topics. A personalized data-tracking feature lets participants benchmark their sta-

DEMOGRAPHICS AND COMPONENTS OF *HEALTHY PFIZER*

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Pfizer's target demographic group for *Healthy Pfizer* was its US employee base of 41 223 members and their dependents, for a total of 105 479 covered lives.¹ The

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tus. Participants can record the results of periodic biometric screening to create a powerful, ongoing record of their progress over time.

To help colleagues complete the questionnaire, Pfizer held health screenings at each location at the time the *Healthy Pfizer* program was launched. At the screenings, employees obtained their blood pressure, body mass index, and cholesterol and glucose levels, which they could then use when responding to the questionnaire. The combination of responses to the health questionnaire and the biometric data from screenings yields a powerful snapshot of current health status.

Automatic data analysis scans the responses to the health risk assessment, including biometric data, to identify participants for risk modification and disease management programs. These programs are offered by *Healthy Pfizer* partners Gordian Health Solutions³ and Matria Healthcare.⁴ Gordian Health Solutions provides lifestyle management programs primarily focused on reducing health risk factors, such as tobacco use, obesity, elevated stress, elevated blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Matria Healthcare provides care counseling and disease management for persons diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, asthma, coronary artery disease, and

other chronic conditions. Employees participating in *Healthy Pfizer* who are identified for the coaching programs receive a letter from Gordian Health Solutions (*Living Healthy*) or Matria Healthcare (*Care Counseling*), depending on which coaching partner is most appropriate, informing them about their eligibility for the program, providing self-enrollment information if they choose to enroll immediately, and letting them know that they will also be receiving a telephone call regarding enrollment (Table).⁵⁻¹⁰

Coaching is provided telephonically by Gordian Health Solutions and Matria Healthcare. Throughout the *Healthy Pfizer* program, no data are identified to Pfizer by individual employee or dependent name. Rather, *Healthy Pfizer* executives receive only aggregate data and population-based reports in accordance with healthcare privacy laws. The entire *Healthy Pfizer* program is adherent with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996,¹¹ ensuring that personal health information is protected.

Participants also have access to a 24/7 telephone line staffed by nurses. Professional nurses provide answers to healthcare questions and offer expert guidance on navigating the healthcare system.

Table. Prevalence of Pfizer's Risk Factors vs National Levels

Risk Factor	Pfizer Inc Prevalence, %	National Prevalence, %	National Prevalence Trigger	Source
High cholesterol level	34	24.6	>240 mg/dL or cholesterol-lowering medication*	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey ⁵
Poor fitness	56	59.0	Adult never engaged in any leisure period of physical activity lasting >10 min/wk	National Health Interview Survey, ⁶ 2003
Hypertension	22	21.0	On ≥2 visits told have hypertension	National Health Interview Survey, ⁶ 2003
Prediabetes	<1	~25.0	Age >45; BMI >25 [†] and family history of diabetes	Benjamin et al, ⁷ 2003
Elevated stress	6	26.0	Often or very stressed or burned out by their work	Families and Work Institute, ⁸ 2006
Tobacco use	9	21.6	Still smoking	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ⁹ 2005

*To convert cholesterol to millimoles per liter, multiply by 0.0259.

[†]Calculated as weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared.

From Knowing to Doing

Awareness helps change behavior, and acquiring health information increases a person's pursuit of healthcare services. When a colleague in the *Healthy Pfizer* program is identified as a candidate for coaching, the individual is invited to telephone a coach for more information about risk factors and about coaching details, such as schedules, goals, and assessments. The participant and coach jointly develop and execute a coaching and behavior change plan that might include weight loss goals, an exercise regimen, suggested menus, and adherence with physician recommendations for glucose testing and other evaluations depending on identified risks.

For Pfizer, the coaching programs are beginning to create a healthier, more productive workforce that is using the right health resources at the right time. Pfizer believes that engagement in these programs will ultimately lower the company's healthcare costs and result in a positive return on investment. More than 13 000 colleagues and dependents have enrolled in the coaching programs, which represents about 25% of those identified as being eligible for the programs.

A strong indicator of future success is a program's ability to tailor its offerings. Questionnaire and screening data are used to fine-tune onsite *Healthy Pfizer* programming. For example, data revealed that overall smoking is less prevalent among Pfizer employees than among the population at large. Site-specific programs deemphasized smoking cessation initiatives in favor of other more relevant issues, such as fitness, nutrition, and weight management. At a manufacturing site implementing the *Healthy Pfizer* program, a high percentage of participants indicated poor diets and family histories of heart disease. These factors were studied, and program offerings were adjusted accordingly.

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ENCOURAGING ENGAGEMENT

Patient-centeredness is an important component in initiatives to drive employee engagement in and responsibility for their healthcare, and sustained engagement is a function of culture change over time. During year 1, the primary *Healthy Pfizer* goal was to encourage healthcare engagement and understanding. This was achieved in part by offering \$100 gift cards to employees and dependents who completed the health questionnaire and risk screening. The initial incentive also included a 20% discount on the employee-pay portion of their health insurance coverage. An expected target goal of 50% participation was exceeded by almost 30%. For the coaching programs, the initial target was a 20%

enrollment rate for colleagues identified for coaching by the end of year 1 and a 40% enrollment rate by the end of year 2. The number of participants who signed on for coaching exceeded the year 1 expectations.

During year 2, more engagement was required. To achieve the maximum incentive (a \$100 gift card and a 20% health insurance discount), participants had to retake the health questionnaire, begin to compile their electronic personal health record, take an annual physical, enroll in the coaching program, participate in at least 2 coaching sessions, and join a walking program offered by *Healthy Pfizer* partner *America on the Move*.¹² As of November 20, 2006, 14 000 employees have registered in the walking program.

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HEALTHY PFIZER CASE STUDIES

Although years 1 and 2 of the *Healthy Pfizer* program have been primarily devoted to increasing engagement rates and to promoting healthcare awareness, multiple individual and family successes are evident. The following 3 case studies are indicative of the program results.

A Research Scientist

A research scientist had never given much thought to her health risk factors until she participated in a *Healthy Pfizer* screening. Despite a healthy lifestyle, genetics proved to be a contributor to her dangerously high blood pressure. Informed actions helped lower her blood pressure to acceptable levels. Now taking medication, exercising daily, and several pounds lighter, she is convinced of the value of healthcare knowledge and vigilance.

A Paralegal

A paralegal met the *Healthy Pfizer* challenges head-on, dropping 40 lb after identifying her risk factors and a family history of type 2 diabetes. She began taking the small steps that had eluded her in the past. In addition to healthy eating, she added moderate exercise to her lifestyle and found ways to remain active throughout her busy day. Behavioral change has helped her find more energy for her son and for graduate school, in addition to her duties at work.

A Logistics Manager

A senior manager of logistics is a 200-lb athlete over 6 ft tall who was surprised to learn that his cholesterol level was climbing silently but steadily. He likens his Gordian Health Solutions coach to a teacher or counselor. Almost a year after his health screening, his

cholesterol level is below 200 mg/dL (<5.18 mmol/L). He watches his sugar intake, stays away from cheese, and continues to exercise regularly.

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REACHING BEYOND

Company officials drew on the decade-long experience of Pfizer Health Solutions (PHS), Pfizer's care management projects subsidiary, in creating *Healthy Pfizer*. PHS is dedicated to improving health and healthcare delivery through innovative programs that demonstrate the value of personalized, coordinated, and accessible healthcare services. Working in partnership with government, payers, and providers, PHS develops and implements health improvement projects that focus on helping individuals and populations living with, or who are at risk for developing, chronic diseases. PHS programs have demonstrated that investments in health can result in better outcomes at lower costs.

Among those programs is *Florida: A Healthy State*, a collaboration between PHS and Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration that emphasizes health understanding and subsequent behavior change. Beginning in 2001, the program provides innovative patient education and nursing care to high-risk Medicaid patients with asthma, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and heart failure. The delivery vehicle is a statewide network of community hospitals, civic organizations, and patient advocacy groups. During the first 3 years, the program helped the state save \$97.4 million through investments and medical cost reductions (as validated by Medical Scientists, Inc, Boston, Mass, an independent third-party evaluator and leader in the use of predictive modeling software). In addition to improvements in clinical indicators, the program has affected utilization rates. Patients across all populations are spending more time in their physicians' offices and less time in emergency departments and hospitals.

The *Amigos en Salud (Friends in Health)* program, another PHS community initiative, is designed to help patients with type 2 diabetes understand their condition, to promote self-management skills, to encourage and sustain behavior change, and to provide ongoing commu-

nity support in the context of individual cultures. The program operates in Savannah, Georgia, to provide culturally relevant education, outreach, and access tools in Hispanic and African American communities with high rates of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and associated modifiable cardiovascular risk factors, including obesity, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition. Like *Healthy Pfizer*, *Amigos en Salud* aims to increase the desire and ability of participants to achieve health goals. Documented successes include lower glycosylated hemoglobin and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels, better adherence to diabetes process measures, reduced body mass index, and improved behavior change, such as eating healthy and exercising.

The time has come for new approaches to US employee healthcare, away from a sick care system to one emphasizing disease prevention. As the initial results of *Healthy Pfizer* are assessed and conveyed, company executives anticipate that *Healthy Pfizer* will resonate beyond a healthier workforce at Pfizer. Other business leaders are encouraged to build on the model described herein to offer their own innovations and approaches to drive better employee health and to lower healthcare costs.

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