Workshop O

Best Practices in a Collective Bargaining Workplace

Overcoming Significant Obstacles to an Unsustainable Health Insurance Plan and Methods to Achieve Substantial Gains in Implementing a Wellness Culture … On the Road to Wellness – Achievements, Challenges & Vision for the Future

3:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.
Kristen M. Treadway is the Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations for the Central Ohio Transit Authority which provides public transit to Columbus Ohio and various contiguous communities. As Vice President, Kristen oversees the Human Resource Division for COTA which provides service to more than 1 million citizens. In this position, Kristen is building a foundation for the division’s day-to-day functions as well as its future operations. Relying on a rich accumulation of professional experiences, associations and education, Kristen is responsible for the ongoing administration, employee relations and strategic planning for the organization's approximate 1,000 full time and part time employees. As Vice President, she supervises all functions of the Human Resources Division including, but not limited to, creating departmental standards; policies and procedures; labor management committees; labor contract negotiations; benefit administration; compensation/classification systems; management coaching; workers’ compensation and methods to ensure compliance with all applicable laws. Kristen has almost eighteen years in the public sector in addition to her years in the private sector.

Kristen graduated Cum Laude from the State University of New York, College at Oswego, with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. Kristen continues to expand her human resource expertise with continuing education opportunities and professional memberships. She holds a Professional in Human Resources (PHR) certification from the Human Resources Certification Institute, a Senior Certified Professional (IPMA-SCP) from the International Public Management Association, a Senior Certified Professional (SHRM-SCP) from the Society for Human Resources Management, and is a Certified Labor Relations Professional (CLRP) from the National Public Employer Labor Relations Association. She is also a member of the Society for Human Resources Management; the International Public Management Association for Human Resources; the National and Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association and is currently serving as Vice President for the Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association having previously served as Treasurer and Conference Coordinator. Finally, she is also a Board Member for the Transit Labor Exchange and serves as a member on the American Public Transportation Association Human Resources Committee and Labor Sub Committee.
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Stephanie Pulliam is the Compensation and Benefits Manager for the Central Ohio Transit Authority, which is the regional public transit provider for greater Columbus and central Ohio. Stephanie is responsible for the direction and administration of all employee benefits, COTA’s health and wellness programs and the compensation/classification system. Stephanie also serves as the Equal Employment Opportunity Investigation Officer for COTA. With approximately ten years of experience in the Human Resources industry, Stephanie provides leadership and expertise to help advance the organization’s HR goals. Some of these achievements were making significant improvements to COTA’s health and wellness program, which has allowed COTA to receive the 2014, 2016 and 2017 Columbus Business First Healthiest Employer Awards, the 2015 HR Excellence Award for Innovation and 2017 HR Excellence Award for Team Excellence by Columbus CEO magazine, and the 2016 Ohio and National Public Employer Labor Relations Associations Pacesetter Awards.

Stephanie graduated Magna Cum Laude from The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. As a member of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources; the National and Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association; and COSI’s (Center of Science and Industry) Young Professional Board, Stephanie is focused on developing her knowledge in the HR Field and her professional network.
On the Road to Wellness: Achievements, Challenges, and Vision for the Future

August 22, 2017
in 2012

WHERE WE WERE...
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

- Relationship with the Union was suffering
- Labor Strike in July 2012
- No trust between COTA and Union
- Unsustainable Health Insurance Plan
- Collective Bargaining Agreements specifically outline generous health insurance plan design

Excise tax projections had COTA reaching a $358,000 estimated tax liability in 2018
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Biometric Screening

- 38-panel Biometric Screening
  - A1C Testing
- Outcomes-Based
- Spouses eligible
- Significant Premium Incentives
- Free 6-month re-check
- Fax results to personal provider

70% participation in the first year
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Building Trust
- Insurance Task Force
- Union representatives
- Members of the HR team
- Insurance Carrier
- Benefits Consultant
- Rebranded Wellness Program
- Wellness Ambassadors
- Wellness Champions

75% of COTA’s workforce is comprised of represented employees

60% of COTA’s total workforce performs completely sedentary work as bus operators

CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Began wellness education & communication campaign
- Home mailings/Postcards
- Monthly newsletter
- Potty Talks
- Wellness Bulletin Boards
- TV Monitors
- Emails
- Intranet
- Paycheck stuffers
- Posters/Flyers
- Weekly newsletter
- Variety of home mailings
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Wellness Education
• Annual Safety & Wellness fair
• Annual Benefits fair
• Dietary guidelines for business meetings
• Benefits of Eating Away from Your Desk
• Sleep for Success
• Maintain Not Gain

Increased wellness fair participation and engagement with a Passport card for prizes, including Fitbits!

HEALTHY BUSINESS MEETING GUIDELINES

COTA has developed the following guidelines to demonstrate our commitment to creating a healthy work environment. We can promote better health, help reduce risks for chronic diseases, and show support for leading healthier lives by offering healthy food options at meetings and events.

General Guidelines:
• Serve appropriate portion and serving sizes
• Choose foods that are low in saturated and trans fats
• Provide whole grain products & limit refined grain products
• Offer fresh fruits and vegetables
• Offer baked, roasted, grilled meats and fish
• Avoid foods with added salt or sugar
• Provide nutrition labels when available
• Beverages – Water, flavored water with no added sugar, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, skim or 1% milk, unsweetened tea or coffee

Options:

BREAKFAST
• Non-fat or Greek yogurt
• Fresh fruit
• Low-fat granola bars
• Whole grain mini muffins/English muffins
• Whole grain bagels (cut in half) or toast
• Low-fat cream cheese, peanut butter, jam, jelly or cheese
• Turkey sausage or bacon

LUNCH/DINNER
• Sandwiches – whole grain breads or wraps, lean meats, low-fat cheese and low-fat condiments
• Low-fat or fat-free dressings
• Vegetarian entrees
• Broth based and low sodium soups
• Steamed or fresh vegetables – no butter or cream sauces
• Fresh fruit
• Whole grain rolls
• Baked sweet or regular potatoes with low-fat toppings
• Baked chips or pretzels
• Low-fat desserts – fresh fruit with low-fat yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping

SNACKS
• Low-fat cheese
• Fresh fruit and vegetables
• Popcorn – light or no butter & salt
• Whole grain crackers or pretzels
• Dried fruit
• Hummus
• Lightly salted or unsalted nuts
• Low-fat granola bars
• Baked chips and salsa
• Angel food cake with fruit topping
## SEPTEMBER BIOMETRIC BOOTCAMP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart" /> Get ready for your biometric screening by participating in September’s Biometric Bootcamp! Follow the calendar and make it your goal to complete each daily task. Your everyday choices add up to make major impact on your health and wellness!</td>
<td>Meal prep a couple meals and snacks for the week</td>
<td>Drink at least 8 cups of water</td>
<td>Meet your onsite health coach</td>
<td>Track your food intake for a day</td>
<td>Park further away than normal</td>
<td>Find a motivational quote and post in a special spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Dumbbells" /> Try a new healthy recipe</td>
<td>Do exercises during TV commercial breaks</td>
<td>Try a new fruit or vegetable</td>
<td>Do a 15-minute workout</td>
<td>Have a healthy snack</td>
<td>Weigh yourself</td>
<td>Look at your food labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Heart" /> Do a hobby that brings you joy</td>
<td>Pay attention to portion size</td>
<td>Cut caffeine for a day</td>
<td>Meet your onsite fitness coach OR spend time stretching</td>
<td>Meet your onsite fitness coach OR walk during your breaks</td>
<td>Take the stairs</td>
<td>Get 8 hours of sleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Breakfast" /> Eat a healthy breakfast</td>
<td>Fresh Fruit Monday &amp; Meet your onsite dietitian</td>
<td>Meet your onsite dietitian OR Pack a healthy lunch</td>
<td>Do 10 minutes of strength training</td>
<td>Skip the soda</td>
<td>Make a Biometric Screening Appointment</td>
<td>Continue your healthy choices!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

On-Site Wellness Resources

- Fitness Facilities
- Dietitian
- Health Coaches
- Fitness Coaches
- Financial Wellness Lunch & Learns
- Fruit Mondays
- Flu Shots
- Mammograms & PSAs
- Musculoskeletal Assessments
- Walking Paths
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Wellness Resources
• Discounted Weight Watchers
• Fitness/Wellness reimbursement
• Telephonic health coaching
• DM Programs
• CoGo Bike Share Discount
• Resistance bands
• Standing Desks
• COTA Cookbook

RESISTANCE BAND EXERCISES

One resistance band is being provided to all COTA employees courtesy of Medical Mutual of Ohio. Resistance bands are a great tool for exercise at home or packing up to take with you during the day for use when you are able to take a quick workout break, even if it is only 10 minutes. Remember to always consult your physician before beginning any exercise program. Below are a few examples of some resistance band exercises. Work up to approximately 3 sets of 10-15 repetitions of each exercise.

Tricep Extensions — Hold the band with your right hand above your head with the elbow bent and pulled in towards your head. Grab the other end of the band behind your back with the left hand until you feel some tension. Extend the right arm straight up then release bending the elbow back to the starting position. Repeat with the other arm. Please note this could be performed in a seated or standing position.

Shoulder Pull downs —
Option 1 — Hold the band with both hands straight over your head. Pull both arms down to the side behind your head, and then return arms straight up. Repeat. Please note this could be performed in a seated or standing position.

Option 2 — Hold the band with both hands straight over your head. Bring the right arm straight down to your side and back up. Repeat with the other arm. Please note this could be performed in a seated or standing position.

Leg Extension — With both hands and knees on the ground, place the band around feet and extend right leg straight up and back. Repeat with the left leg.
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Online Portal/Activities

• Health Assessment
• Healthy Weight Loss Competition
• YMCA Corporate Challenge
• Basketball League
• Challenges
  • Steps
  • Hydration
  • Healthy Lunchbox
  • Locomotion
• Preventive Exams
• Participation in Charity Drives
• Online Workshops
in 2016
WHERE WE ARE NOW...
2015 Negotiations

- Base employee premium contributions are now 25%
  - Incentives available to pay as little as 8%
- Significant health insurance plan design changes
  - Deductible tripled
  - Out-of-pocket maximum doubled
  - Co-insurance
  - Co-payments
  - Specialty prescription tier

*Premium incentives in 2017 are almost $4,200 annually*

*Excise tax projections are now at $40,179 for 2020*
MEASURING SUCCESS-CLAIMS

Health Insurance

- 2016 Premiums - 8.8% decrease in premiums
  - Expected 2.45% decrease
  - Loss Ratio down to 72.2%
- Preventive Services Utilization – don’t forget about dental & vision
- High Claimants – disease categories
- DM Enrollment
MEASURING SUCCESS-CLAIMS

Health Insurance

• Paid Claims Per Member Per Month
  • Biometric Participants - $484.57
  • Non Participants - $578.13

• New Members – Claim trend from last renewal to current renewal
  • Enrolled 2+ Years - 0.2%
  • Less than 2 Years – 29.2%

• High Claimants
  • Catastrophic claims over $50,000 – 25.6% one year trend
  • Non-catastrophic claims – -7.0% one year trend
Achievements

- Biometric Wellness Program
  - Reports of significant weight loss & smoking cessation
  - Decrease in most health indicators
  - Life-saving identifications
  - Positive Change:
    - 85% in the healthy range maintained
    - 43% at moderate risk improved to healthy
    - 41% at high risk improved to healthy or moderate

*Biometric program participation is now at 81%*
MEASURING SUCCESS-PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION

- 2012: 69.13%
- 2013: 62.90%
- 2014: 80.80%
- 2015: 80.28%

Central Ohio Transit Authority
MEASURING SUCCESS - BIOMETRIC OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IHI Improvements</th>
<th>Regressed</th>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Improved</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>32 (94%)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDL Cholesterol</td>
<td>43 (27%)</td>
<td>21 (13%)</td>
<td>95 (60%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucose</td>
<td>66 (30%)</td>
<td>30 (14%)</td>
<td>126 (57%)</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>20 (11%)</td>
<td>35 (20%)</td>
<td>121 (69%)</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>51 (51%)</td>
<td>49 (49%)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total number of members asked to improve based on their last health evaluation

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newly Discovered Conditions</th>
<th>At Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anemia</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blood Pressure</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Cholesterol</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney Condition</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liver Condition</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thyroid Condition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metabolic Syndrome*</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEASURING SUCCESS—BIOMETRIC OUTCOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERESTING INSIGHTS</th>
<th>REPEAT Members</th>
<th>NEW Members</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average BMI</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Tobacco Users</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Problem Drinking</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Members Referred to Physician</td>
<td>66.0%</td>
<td>60.0%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members at risk for Heart Attack over next 10 yrs</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage with Metabolic Syndrome</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERACTIVE HEALTH INDEX (IHI)</th>
<th>REPEAT Members</th>
<th>NEW Members</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average IHI Score</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in High Risk</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in Moderate Risk</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in Low Risk</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Health Score Migration

*change over 1 year period*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ending Health Score</th>
<th>Starting Health Score</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate Risk</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate Risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate Risk</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Healthy</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate Risk</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High Risk</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Member Totals by Risk Level

| 865 | 248 | 216 |
MEASURING SUCCESS-PARTICIPATION

UNION PARTICIPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Union Employees Participating</th>
<th>Union Employees Not Participating</th>
<th>Union Spouses Participating</th>
<th>Union Spouses Not Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CENTRAL OHIO TRANSIT AUTHORITY
MEASURING SUCCESS-PARTICIPATION

UNION PREMIUMS

- Participant (Met Goals-8%)
  - 320; 52%
- Participant-Not Met Goals (12%)
  - 145; 23%
- Participant-Nicotine (20%)
  - 72; 12%
- Non-Participant (25%)
  - 84; 13%

ADMIN PREMIUMS

- Participant (Met Goals-8%)
  - 90; 67%
- Participant-Not Met Goals (12%)
  - 16; 12%
- Participant-Nicotine (20%)
  - 21; 16%
- Non-Participant (25%)
  - 7; 5%
Communication

• Claims graph in newsletter
• Biometric thermometer
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Achievements

• Columbus CEO Magazine 2015 HR Excellence Award for HR Innovation
• Columbus CEO Magazine 2017 HR Excellence Award for Team Excellence
• Columbus Business First 2014 & 2016 & 2017 Healthiest Employer Awards
• OHPELRA & NPELRA 2015 & 2016 Pacesetter Awards
WHERE WE ARE GOING...
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Continue improvements

- Introduce more wellness activities
- Consider self-funding for health insurance
- Evaluate feasibility of an on-site clinic
  - Dependents eligible
  - Wellness Center
  - Limited occupational health services
- Negotiations this year
ON THE ROAD TO WELLNESS

Questions?

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COTA: On the Road to Wellness

The Central Ohio Transit Authority (COTA) is the regional public sector agency providing mass transportation to residents throughout central Ohio. With a service area consisting of more than a million residents, COTA provides nearly 20 million passenger trips each year.

COTA is committed to excellence in serving its stakeholders, customers, employees and taxpayers; delivering quality transportation services; conducting business courteously, safely, ethically and reliably; and demonstrating leadership that is fiscally responsible and environmentally conscientious.

Bringing Everyone Together

Many of COTA’s employees are represented by the Transport Workers Union (TWU), Local 208. In 2012, a new contract was successfully bargained and approved following a 3-day labor strike. However, between the favorable health benefits included in this contract, along with economic factors influencing the healthcare industry, the benefits ultimately led to hefty health plan premium increases for both COTA and its employees.

In the wake of the strike and the contentious relations that resulted, along with approximately 80% of its workforce largely sedentary, COTA leadership implemented a comprehensive wellness program. The strategy, vision and goal were to defray rising healthcare costs and build a positive corporate culture. However, as a public entity, significant work needed to be done with a limited budget.

Employees were distrustful of management and skeptical about potential advantages a wellness program would deliver. While this situation is not unique in a union environment, it was certainly heightened with the struggling relationships already being experienced.

COTA recognized the scale of such an endeavor and brought together a project team. It consisted of two groups: one, an Insurance Task Force consisting of COTA HR representatives, union members, the health insurance carrier and benefits consultant; and two, a Wellness Committee representing all departments of the COTA organization. Combined, these two groups represented all the constituencies with stakes in the wellness program.

Based on the recommendation of Kristen Treadway, COTA’s Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations, Interactive Health was selected as the partner of choice. Kristen worked with Interactive Health at her former municipality and was confident Interactive Health would jump-start COTA’s program and deliver healthy results.

Setting Out “On the Road to Wellness”

The Wellness Committee aptly branded the COTA program “On The Road to Wellness.” Rebuilding a corporate culture based on employee confidence, job satisfaction and security was integral to long-term success. With a message that communicates “we care about the health and well-being of you and your family,” management planted the seeds of the new culture. Interactive Health partnered with COTA to develop strategies that ensured their
challenges would not be barriers to the wellness program’s success.

**Challenge: Confidentiality Concerns**

Employees were concerned that COTA would use their biometric information against them and/or share it with the insurance company.

Information sessions were held prior to beginning the biometric screenings in order to help alleviate concerns and answer any questions. Heavy communication regarding confidentiality, and handouts, such as HIPAA statements, were provided before and during the annual screenings. As Ambassadors, the Task Force and Wellness Committee members also helped break down barriers by openly discussing confidentiality concerns and the health screening process with their co-workers.

**Challenge: Communication**

The majority of employees lacked email addresses and access to computers. In addition, they worked outside typical office settings.

To address this challenge, the team created alternate methods of communication, including a monthly wellness newsletter; a weekly COTA newsletter with wellness announcements; TV monitors posted relevant information at each location; posters and flyers in day rooms, restrooms and other areas; home mailings to employees and spouses; payroll stuffers; and engaged union representatives helped distribute flyers to spread the word.

**Challenge: Multiple Locations and Shifts**

COTA employees work from numerous locations and on diverse shifts, creating challenges for screening scheduling.

In response, screening locations were made available on Saturdays at off-site alternate locations. Onsite scheduling opportunities were offered on multiple days, at multiple times and at various locations.

**Challenge: Time Pressures**

COTA employees are under intense pressure to adhere to strict scheduling.

To lessen this challenge, increased numbers of phlebotomists were made available, sometimes “on the fly” to get participants in and out quickly. Walk-in accommodations were made for employees on call or without set schedules.

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**The Shift to a Culture of Wellness**

“We were really trying to change the culture,” says Kristen Treadway, Vice President of Human Resources and Labor Relations. “We began looking at the factors causing the health insurance plan to be unsustainable. The team put a new focus on the health plan design, as well as current and future challenges associated with the plan.”

The first initiative launched was a 34-panel biometric screening program offered to eligible employees and spouses. “The program goes beyond what a typical program would,” Stephanie Pulliam, Compensation and Benefits Manager, says. “Using biometric and not BMI, which can vary for a lot of people, means we can get a much clearer view of areas people need to work on. We are attempting to do as much as we can, as far as education, tools and resources to help people maintain and improve healthy lifestyles.”
Setting the Stage: Awareness of Participants’ Health Status

The company’s first major undertaking was to raise employees’ awareness of their health status and then to provide the resources to achieve personal wellness goals. Helping participants “understand their numbers”—that is, the results of a 34-panel biometric screening offered by Interactive Health—set the stage. Eligible participants received communications through multi-media avenues encouraging them to register online or over the telephone.

The screenings evaluated participants’ risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, anemia risks and other serious conditions. Qualified healthcare professionals from Interactive Health promptly followed up with all participants identified with critical conditions. In addition, participants could have their results communicated to their personal physicians. This step encouraged meetings between participants and physicians to address negative results and monitor conditions on an ongoing basis.

Creativity and Innovation

The Task Force and Wellness Committee developed components not widely available in the Central Ohio region. Examples include:

- Telephonic health coaching
- Educational webinars
- Online meal and exercise planners
- Annual health and wellness fairs
- COTA basketball league
- Team walking competitions
- Individual healthy weight loss competitions
- Monthly onsite dietitian visits
- Educational grocery shopping trips
- Onsite fitness centers
- Reimbursement for fitness or wellness related memberships
- Distribution of resistance bands for quick workout breaks that may be accomplished even while at a layover point on a bus

Participants were given access to a robust, customized website that provided ease of scheduling and real-time access to results, health programs, interactive tools and calculators, health webinars, a health library and other resources to help participants achieve their health goals.

Incentives Encourage Participation

Along with improved health and quality of life, the wellness program offers COTA employees and their spouses generous financial incentives through reduced health benefit premiums. This strategy has assisted COTA in obtaining over 80% participation in the 2015 health evaluations.

The base premium cost for employees and enrolled spouses is 25% of COTA’s total premium cost. Reduced premium amounts depend on whether participants are enrolled in the COTA medical plan and meet their health goals. Employees with family coverage have the opportunity to save as much as $3,978.48 in 2016 when health goals are achieved.
Employees Enrolled in Medical Plan

Employees and spouses who are enrolled in the COTA medical plan are eligible to participate in the biometric screening portion of the wellness program. For 2016, the health premiums of first-time participants and participants who meet all of their health goals are reduced to 8%. This means that COTA covers 92% of the participant’s premium.

If participants meet some but not all of their health goals, their premiums are reduced to 12%. If they do not meet their goals due to the presence of nicotine at the time of screening, their premiums are reduced to 20% and COTA covers 80% of the participant’s premium.

Employees who do not participate pay their full 25% share of their health premiums.

Employees Not Enrolled in Medical Plan

Employees who are not enrolled in COTA’s medical plan receive a $400 monthly opt-out payment and are still eligible to participate in all aspects of the wellness program. However, these participants pay 50% of the biometric screening cost and COTA pays the remaining 50%.

The Numbers: Counting Success

As demonstrated by the following 2015 results, participants continue to show improved health, and more than 90% reported experiencing personal value from the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blood pressure</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glucose</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triglycerides</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco use</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Improvements for COTA Wellness Program Participants (2014-2015)

New Conditions Discovered

The value of the wellness program is also evident in the discovery of new conditions. In 2015 alone:

- Moderate risk conditions were discovered in 94 participants.
- Critical risk conditions were discovered in 23 participants. (These participants were contacted within 1-2 business days following testing.)
- Early stage cancer was detected in 25 participants.

Migration of Health Risk

Migration of health risk over time is another important measure of a wellness program’s success.

More than 1,500 COTA participants who were screened in two consecutive years over three time periods (2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015) were assigned risk levels of healthy, moderate and high based on their personal health scores.
The data revealed that positive change was seen among all risk levels:

- 85% of those in the healthy range remained healthy.
- 43% of participants at moderate risk improved to a healthy state.
- 41% of participants at high risk improved to a healthy or moderate risk state.

Impact on Productivity and Medical Spend

Risk migration for core conditions which impact employee productivity and overall medical spend was also observed. The following chart depicts the rate at which participants with disease conditions in 2014 migrated to healthy or in-control states in 2015. Overall, these positive risk migrations produced corporate cost avoidance of approximately $315,000 in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage of Participants Migrating to a Healthier State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-control diabetes</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-diabetes</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metabolic syndrome</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypertension</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anemia</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bottom Line: Value and Empowerment

While improved spending trends derived from the COTA wellness program are substantial, the value extends well beyond saving costs…to saving lives. The program promotes relationships between participants who do not have or do not visit a primary care physician. The comprehensive screenings cast a wider net to identify undiagnosed conditions not detected in more limited panels. The program helps participants understand their numbers and tracks progress in attaining their annual personal health goals.

Reasons for Success

COTA attributes several key strategies to their wellness program success:

- Taking a strategic approach that began with awareness and has transitioned to a goal-based program
- Integrating benefit and plan design, union contracts and wellness into one package
- Obtaining executive level and union support
- Focusing on creating a corporate culture of wellness
- Being creative in finding ways to address specific challenges unique to COTA
- Customizing communications
- Establishing a generous incentive to drive participation

After four years in the program, improved employee health is now impacting COTA’s bottom line and the benefits are being shared company wide. For 2016, COTA achieved an 8.8% decrease in its fully-insured medical plan premiums, which netted approximately $1 million in savings. These savings are shared with employees through a decrease in premium contributions.
Partnering with the health plan to bill the biometric screening as a preventive claim

Employee Impact

In 2015, a COTA employee reported that her husband's biometric screening revealed potential heart disease. Interactive Health outreached and engaged the participant immediately. A stress test performed by the primary care physician showed the need for the insertion of a heart catheter and a stent. The screening, the couple believes, saved the husband’s life.

Data from the first year of the wellness program revealed 25 participants potentially with cancer. Data from 2015 reported only two participants with the possibility of early stage cancer. One of these participants reported that early intervention helped him successfully treat his cancer.

These kinds of human stories continue to generate excitement in COTA’s wellness program. It has empowered employees and their spouses to adopt healthier habits, leading to true lifestyle changes and an overall healthier workforce.

Evaluating Success and Investing in the Future

As COTA looks toward the future, progress will continue to be monitored. A feasibility study for an onsite health clinic was conducted in 2014, and COTA will continue to monitor its claims data for future development. In 2016, COTA has once again expanded its wellness program to include A1C testing for all participants identified as having an increased risk for diabetes, and expanded outreach will target approximately 35% of the COTA participants trending in the wrong direction.

Measurement of program success and employee impact indicates that COTA and its employees will continue to reap the financial and health benefits of wellness. The program initiated four years ago now serves as a model for all companies to invest in employee wellness.

COTA Honored for Wellness Program Success

HR Excellence Award – Innovation

In 2015, COTA was honored with the “HR Excellence Award—Innovation” by Columbus CEO magazine. The award was based on the successful implementation of COTA’s wellness program aimed at changing the organization’s culture, improving the health and wellness of employees and their families, introducing successful and popular employee wellness initiatives, and ultimately, containing costs.

Healthiest Employer of Central Ohio

The “2014 and 2016 Healthiest Employer of Central Ohio” award from Columbus Business First recognized COTA’s commitment to create a healthier, more productive community of employees who understand the value of healthcare and are actively involved in managing their own health. In accepting this award, COTA committed to serving as a resource to other organizations whose aim is creating or improving corporate wellness initiatives.

Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association, and National Public Employer Labor Relations Association Pacesetter Awards

Stephanie Pulliam, Compensation and Benefits Manager, won these awards for her work and leadership with COTA’s insurance and wellness program.