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# Indiana Employer

## Industry News

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# Turning the Corner on Employee Health

**A**n unhealthy work environment contributes to absenteeism, high turnover, reduced productivity and low employee morale. To combat these hazards, Hoosier employers have started to turn their focus to wellness programs to improve the well-being of their workers. With health care premiums jumping at a clip of 11 percent annually, it's not enough to roll out a bare bones well-ness program.

An integrated and comprehensive wellness program that takes into account the health of at-risk employees and non at-risk employees is providing pioneering services to reduce health costs and enhance the overall well-being of human capital. For example, Spectrum Health Systems, a health management program provider in Indianapolis, is saving its clients on average \$3.97 for every dollar invested.

Many integrated and comprehensive wellness programs begin with a health risk assessment (HRA). Though they vary widely in format and length, HRAs have a common objective: surveying employees for health risk factors that have the most impact on their current and future health. Survey areas include health perceptions, medical conditions and risk factors, medications being used and general health and nutrition.

HRAs prove to be hugely important because they determine your at-risk population – usually no more than 15 percent. Once identified, employers can work with their at-risk employees to get the medical help they need before a disease or condition becomes grim. The early detection of disease or other health problems reflects favorably on the employer for having a program in place to identify ill-

ness early and preventing bigger health costs down the road. But HRAs can only do so much when it comes to the total organizational wellness equation.

Additional important measures need to be taken when considering your entire employee population and the root causes which contribute to poor organizational and individual wellness. This is why a more well-rounded approach to health management that takes into account an inventory of employees'

eating habits and activity levels has proven to be highly effective.

"We have to look at the total picture – workplace culture, natural behaviors, communication, working conditions and management styles," said Joan Ridgeway, President of Indianapolis-based Consulting Resources, Inc.

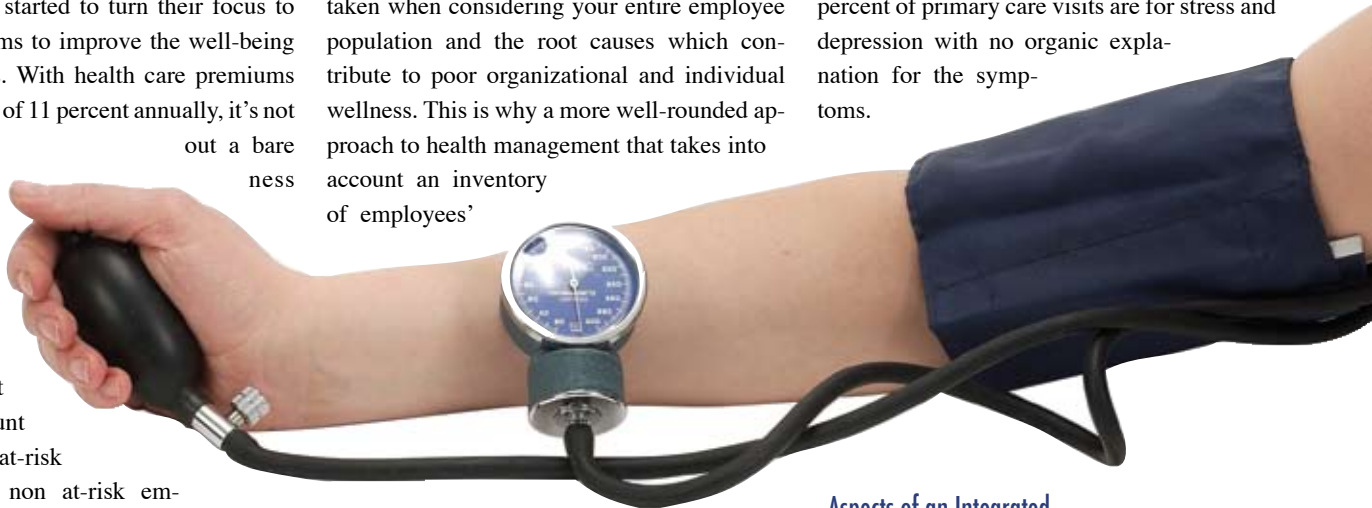
Several companies across the state are taking that approach. Clarian Health, Spectrum Health Systems, and Consulting Resources have all developed integrated wellness programs that provide an inclusive perspective of employee health.

Clarian Healthy Results is a data-driven total health management solution created by Clarian Health, a leading health organization located in Indianapolis. Clarian Healthy Results integrates the HRA with an Employee Assistance Program.

"This ensures that anyone who is not coping well or fails the validated depression screening tool within our HRA is referred to a confidential counselor for appropriate follow-up and treatment," said Jennifer Gleckman, Director of Health Management Strategies at

Clarian Health.

Without an HRA in place, people can undergo costly diagnostic tests to explain their digestive problems or headaches that result from stress left unchecked. In fact, as many as 50 percent of primary care visits are for stress and depression with no organic explanation for the symptoms.



## Aspects of an Integrated Wellness Program

- Cultural and Behavioral Analysis
- Health Risk Assessment with or without medical screening
- Group Benefit Plan(s)
- Safety Programs
- Human Resources Programs
- Communication Audit
- Business Goals

By linking the screening mechanism and the follow-up treatment, Clarian Healthy Results is able to reduce health care costs dramatically and at the same time

provide immediate care. With depression and anxiety as the leading cost drivers in group medical plans, this combined approach offers a powerful return on investment solution for employers.

Their wellness initiatives also include a tool that measures the effect that risk factors have on productivity and an analysis of those who need health coaches to make lifestyle and behavior changes.

EHOB, a medical manufacturer in Indianapolis, recently hired Clarian Healthy Results because of its well-rounded approach

toward wellness.

"It's not just the health screenings they offer. It's the one-on-one consultations, the follow-up, continuing education activities, and the ongoing employee health profiles," said Ken Turro, EHOB Executive Vice President of Operations.

Nearly every one of EHOB's 110 employees enrolled in the wellness program.

"Clarian Healthy Results is working to help our employees get healthy. And when they are healthy, they come to work regularly and they are more productive. We also hope that it will drive down the cost of health premiums," Turro said.

Consulting Resources, a premier Indianapolis human resources consulting group, offers a program known as Invigoration Analysis. It is designed to capture organizational, cultural, and behavioral data, which is used to formulate communication approaches, stress reduction tactics, and training plans. The Invigoration Analysis assesses the organizational performance, such as communication, working conditions, job satisfaction, performance, supervision and management.

The program then utilizes the Extended DISC Personal Analysis assessment to identify the strengths and development areas of individual employees. This assessment gives companies a detailed picture of the behavioral makeup of the organization, including the possible causes of stress. Plans can then be developed to alleviate the stress and create a culture that is healthier and more productive.

Also located in Indianapolis is Spectrum Health Systems, which provides health management programs that identify individuals most at risk for developing serious, high-cost illnesses. Employees are then given the education and support they need to adopt healthier lifestyle practices. The result is improved health outcomes and decreased dependence on costly medical treatment.

Additionally, Spectrum offers disease management and lifestyle programs, a prenatal risk management program, on-site educational programs, and 24-hour support and education. It even provides predictive modeling systems to forecast high-risk employees and associated costs.

"Studies continue to validate that effective integration of comprehensive health management programs can show a significant return on investment," Spectrum Chief Operating Officer Warner Roberts said. "Forward thinking employers are

taking this proactive approach, not only to manage the health of their population, but the health of their business's bottom line."

Enhancing the wellbeing of your employees requires more than just one component. And it takes more than just skimming the surface to uncover the risk factors that are affecting them. A comprehensive approach, involving a review of workplace conditions, employee health assessments and health treatment programs have shown to be essential in reducing the price of health care and at

the same time increasing productivity.

"Comprehensive, outcome-oriented programs are the answer. They are helping one very important employee at a time," Clarian's Gleckman said. **IE**

*Joan E. Ridgeway is the president of Consulting Resources, Inc. She carries the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) certification awarded by the Society for Human Resource Management and a green belt Six Sigma certification. She is a graduate of Butler University and holds a Masters in Management from Indiana Wesleyan University. Ridgeway may be reached at joan@consultresources.com.*



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