

INDIANAPOLIS BUSINESS JOURNAL

CENTRAL INDIANA'S BUSINESS AUTHORITY

VOL. 31 NO. 26 • AUGUST 30, 2010



HEALTHIEST EMPLOYERS
of Indiana

WINNER 5,000+ employees

Eli Lilly and Company

Many companies struggle with the “carrots and sticks” of wellness: Are incentives or penalties more likely to motivate employees to pursue a healthy lifestyle? Pharmaceutical giant Eli Lilly and Company sidesteps the question entirely by offering a wide array of services that employees can, but aren’t coerced, to use.

They are neither penalized for passing on the services nor rewarded for using them.

“We have taken a soft, quieter approach in hopes that when employees are ready to change a behavior the service would be there for them,” says Dr. Kristine Courtney, senior director, corporate health services. “We haven’t taken a push approach.”

“I think it is innovative to offer many programs and have employees choose where they are and what programs they would like to be involved with,” she adds. “A lot of programs are trying to drive certain behaviors, and, honestly, there’s a lot of benefit to that, but I think if you are not ready for that change, or at least ready to approach some of the information for that change, trying to push and drive those behaviors may not be workable. So I think it is great that we’re allowing employees to choose where they are and if and when they want to participate in a program.”

At Lilly, when the employee or family member is ready to change behaviors, an appropriate program is available at convenient locations, with little or no impact on free time, and is provided at no cost.

“We want everyone to have a primary care physician and see that physician for their care, but if in a particular year you are not able to get your pap smear done in a timely manner we’re going to try to help you with that service. We build our programs over time when we see a need or the data suggests that there’s a good reason for doing that exam,” Courtney says.

One example is the ongoing STEP wise health surveillance. The program is based on the employee’s age and current health. The employee discusses their general health with a nurse and completes a history. Each visit includes



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Eli Lilly and Company corporate headquarters.

blood pressure, urinalysis, blood count, blood chemistry, lipids and BMI. They may also see an on-site physician. The exam detects unknown disease and helps manage any current conditions to maximize wellbeing. The program is offered on-site during work hours, and has an age-based participation rate of 63% of Indiana employees.

Lilly also provides screening colonoscopy for employees and spouses over age 49. It’s the largest community-based screening program in the world. It offers digital mammography and gynecologic exams, and these are just a few of a wide array of services available.

One of Lilly’s newest services is an electronic medical record system with outcome measurements, online appointment scheduling and employee access to test results. The Web-based system sends information to the Indiana Network for Patient Care (INPC) to share the employee’s Lilly health data with their personal health provider. Lilly is the first employer to participate in the INPC data sharing network.

“I have seen such great ownership and excitement from employees that they’re able to go into an electronic Web portal and actually see their information and be able to put those in a graph and see how they’ve improved over time or possibly not,” Courtney says.

“It’s a struggle for medicine in general at this time to have everybody connected. We are collecting blood sugar, blood pressures and cholesterol. Your personal physician may be very interested in that information. We’ve been very lucky to be able to have our new electronic medical record system connect with that network so we have new sharing capabilities.”

Courtney notes that Lilly’s wellness program is constantly evolving. Near-term goals include developing a diverse wellness team, a metrics dashboard to measure progress toward eliminating identified risks, refinements of the electronic personal health record and reviewing incentives to influence behaviors that help reduce health risks over time, such as weight loss.

Lilly’s approach seems to be working. Compared to the general Indiana population, among Lilly employees in Indiana there are 50% fewer smokers, 25% fewer diabetics and 23% more employees with normal cholesterol.

“Lilly is proud to be recognized as one of Indiana’s Healthiest Employers,” says John Lechleiter, Lilly’s president and CEO. “We have worked to develop a culture of wellness at Lilly and provide our employees with the tools they need to make changes in their lives that will improve their health. Healthy employees are also more productive, and that’s good for Lilly and good for our community,” he said.

“It is vital that leaders make employee health a priority in their organizations,” adds Lechleiter. “At Lilly, we know that all our innovation comes from our people; their well-being and vitality are our greatest competitive advantage. Our top leaders share my commitment and passion for employee health and wellness; that is reflected in the many programs we offer employees to help them identify health risks and ways to modify those risks.”