

*Well Workplace Award
Executive Summary*

Memorial Hospital Of Rhode Island

Pawtucket, RI

Silver Award

This document is an executive summary of the entire application submitted by this organization. For more information on the Well Workplace application criteria and the process for submission, please visit <http://www.welcoa.org/wellworkplace>. Complete applications are on file at the Wellness Councils of America.

Information in this publication is carefully reviewed for accuracy. Questions, comments, or ideas are welcome. Please direct to Dr. David Hunnicutt, Executive Editor, at the address below.

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**WELLNESS COUNCILS
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Preface: Organizational and Program Background

Organization Background

Memorial Hospital of Rhode Island is a 294-bed, non-profit teaching and research center. Founded in 1901, Memorial is now the largest employer in the area, with 1,638 employees. Led by President/CEO Francis R. Dietz, we established four primary care, urgent care and specialty sites in surrounding communities. We provide a full range of medical care while offering specialized programs in primary care, rehabilitation and preventive healthcare. Affiliated with Brown Medical School, Memorial hosts family and internal medicine residency programs, and operates The Cancer Center, Rhode Island's only affiliate of Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare.

In 2003, Memorial received the Bronze Well Workplace Award.

Background of wellness initiative

Historically, the wellness program has been a shared but separate vision. The Nursing and Employee Health departments coordinated immunizations and addressed the basic health care concerns of employees while the Public Relations Department organized a calendar of educational events and health screening for staff and the community.

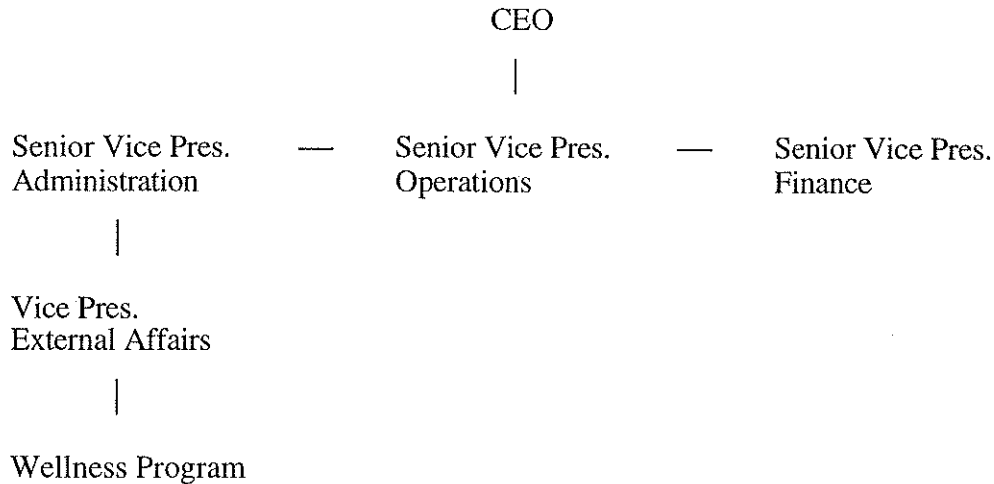
In 2001, Memorial merged those two endeavors under the umbrella of a Wellness Committee, expanding committee membership to bridge from staff to administration and recruiting participation from offsite affiliates. The committee polled the entire staff for input and suggestions, identified objectives, and instituted programs at various levels of readiness to achieve those goals.

Mission/vision statement of hospital and wellness program

Our vision is to excel as a primary healthcare network and teaching hospital, focusing on our mission of patient-centered care, and developing research-based clinical

practice. Our wellness mission is to encourage employees to practice healthy behaviors by providing information, services and supports concerning risk factor reduction, health promotion and intervention.

Organizational chart



The look and feel of the initiative based on the seven Cs

The Worksite Wellness Initiative at Memorial Hospital is both fun and serious business as a strong team made of up people with a variety of clinical and promotional strengths work diligently to raise awareness, boost activity levels and encourage healthy eating, without appearing intrusive or over-bearing.

The initiative was a top-down mandate from its beginning in 2001. The concept was introduced by a member of the Board of Trustees, who helped launch a broader initiative statewide and continues to work at that level. Administrators envisioned a facelift to the several existing but independent wellness endeavors offered through Human Resources, Public Relations and Employee Health. The President, in a letter to every employee, praised

hospital employees as the caretakers of the community and then declared, "The time has come that we focus on ourselves."

The Wellness Team that was organized draws together a wealth of experience, knowledge, enthusiasm and energy, and ranges from younger employees to the more seasoned. The team is comprised of nurses, physical and occupational therapists, risk managers, safety officers, public relations professionals and dietitians.

Once the dual focuses of weight loss and exercise were identified through our risk assessment survey, this diverse group drafted an appropriate operating plan and started the never-ending cycle of brain-storming a menu of appealing interventions that would address the objectives set forth in the plan. The diversity of the group is its best asset. The interventions the team has concocted and executed have been wacky – such as the "Physical Medicine Fear Factor" that had participants competing against the clock to perform tasks common for physical medicine patients, including pulling on a pair of boxer shorts with an adaptive device – delicious, enlightening and/or relaxing.

Perhaps more importantly, however, the team quickly assumed the role of collective cheerleader in promoting interventions and encouraging other employees to participate. When activities, presentations or contests are organized, team members either volunteer to execute the activity or participate themselves, setting the example for other employees to follow. They are enthusiastic and friendly, a combination that generally works.

The team is also persistent in hashing through evaluations of various interventions and using the information to plan future activities. Members are skilled at translating outcomes into opportunities for the next season of wellness events.

An individual who has been instrumental in the growth of the wellness program

Our Worksite Wellness Committee chairperson, Susan Hawryluk, has spearheaded the team from its infancy. Following training at a local Worksite Wellness University, she initiated assessment surveys and assumed major responsibility for evaluating and tracking program participation. Her creative approaches to health promotion and risk reduction education have inspired and encouraged increased participation.

“It is gratifying to see how far we have come in creating an environment and culture of wellness for our employees,” she stated. “Our results show that our efforts are making a difference and that staff are becoming more diligent in taking care of themselves.”

Three unique strengths the program offers for employees

When devising a user-friendly Worksite Wellness Initiative for Memorial Hospital, the Wellness Team was keenly aware of the unique operating environment at a 24-hour healthcare operation that spans five locations. In keeping the focus on weight loss and exercise, the team created an interesting and inviting combination of programs, talks, fairs and contests that could be rolled out across the hospital network. Many can be implemented by staff members at their convenience.

It is this availability and convenience of Memorial’s Worksite Wellness Initiative that is truly one of its strongest selling points. Whenever possible, programs are offered at times convenient to multiple shifts. Talks are given several times during lunch and dinner hours, informational displays are available 24-hours a day, and programs that require a specific stretch of time – such as Weight Watchers and Pilates – are scheduled at times that are convenient for both first- and second-shift employees.

Another strength would be the extremely unstructured parameters for participation that are possible with other activities, such as contests. Handing out cards and rules for a contest like Healthy Bingo or walking diaries for the Walk to Jamestown allows employees to participate on their own time, at their own pace. This is attractive for all three shifts and all five locations. Interoffice mail enables off-site employees to finish a contest and send in their entries easily and quickly. Items necessary to participate in such an activity are distributed through interoffice mail as well. Still more items are left on wellness tables outside the cafeteria for employees to grab anytime.

The third unique strength of the Memorial Worksite Wellness Initiative is its affordability. The Wellness Team was adamantly opposed to charging for most activities. Being innovative in its brain-storming, the Team was able to offer 95 percent of the wellness activities free of charge. Fee-based programs are only those which employees specifically request through feedback forms and must be contracted with outside vendors, such as Weight Watchers International and the YMCA.

Each of these strengths feeds one of the main mantras of the Wellness Team. The Team firmly believes that wellness programming should be available – financially and time-wise – to all of Memorial Hospital's employees.

Most popular programs

Weight Watchers at Work is one of the most popular programs we offer. Since April 2002, more than 225 employees have participated and have been successful in losing a total of 2,250 pounds! Our walking programs have also been well received, with employees enthusiastically joining in our third annual summer walk this year. Our Employee Health and Fitness Day in May is always well attended, due to the convenient location and time – in the cafeteria and adjacent meeting room during lunch and dinner – and because it provides

opportunities for employees to try something new, from exercise equipment to fruit smoothies.